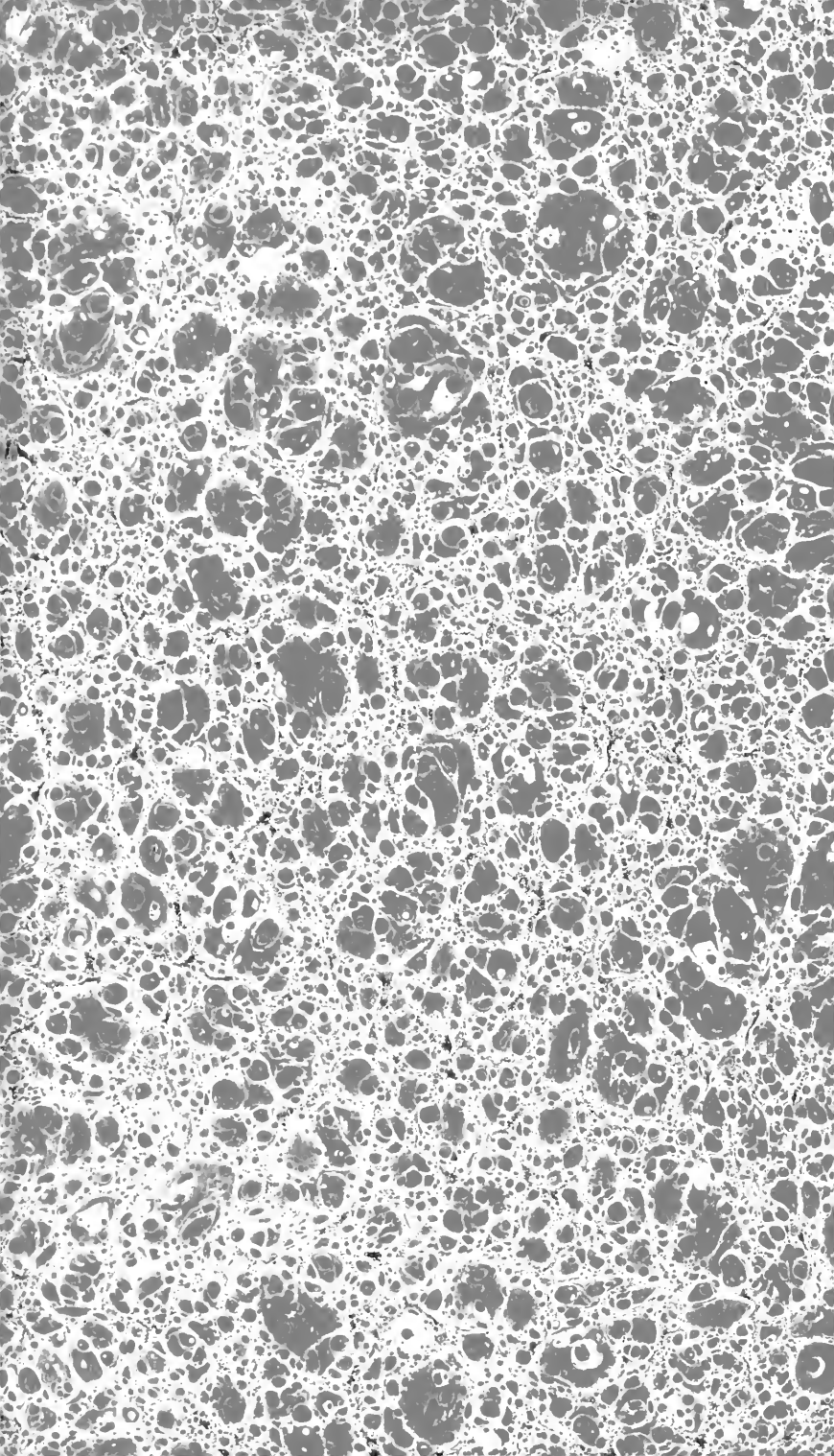
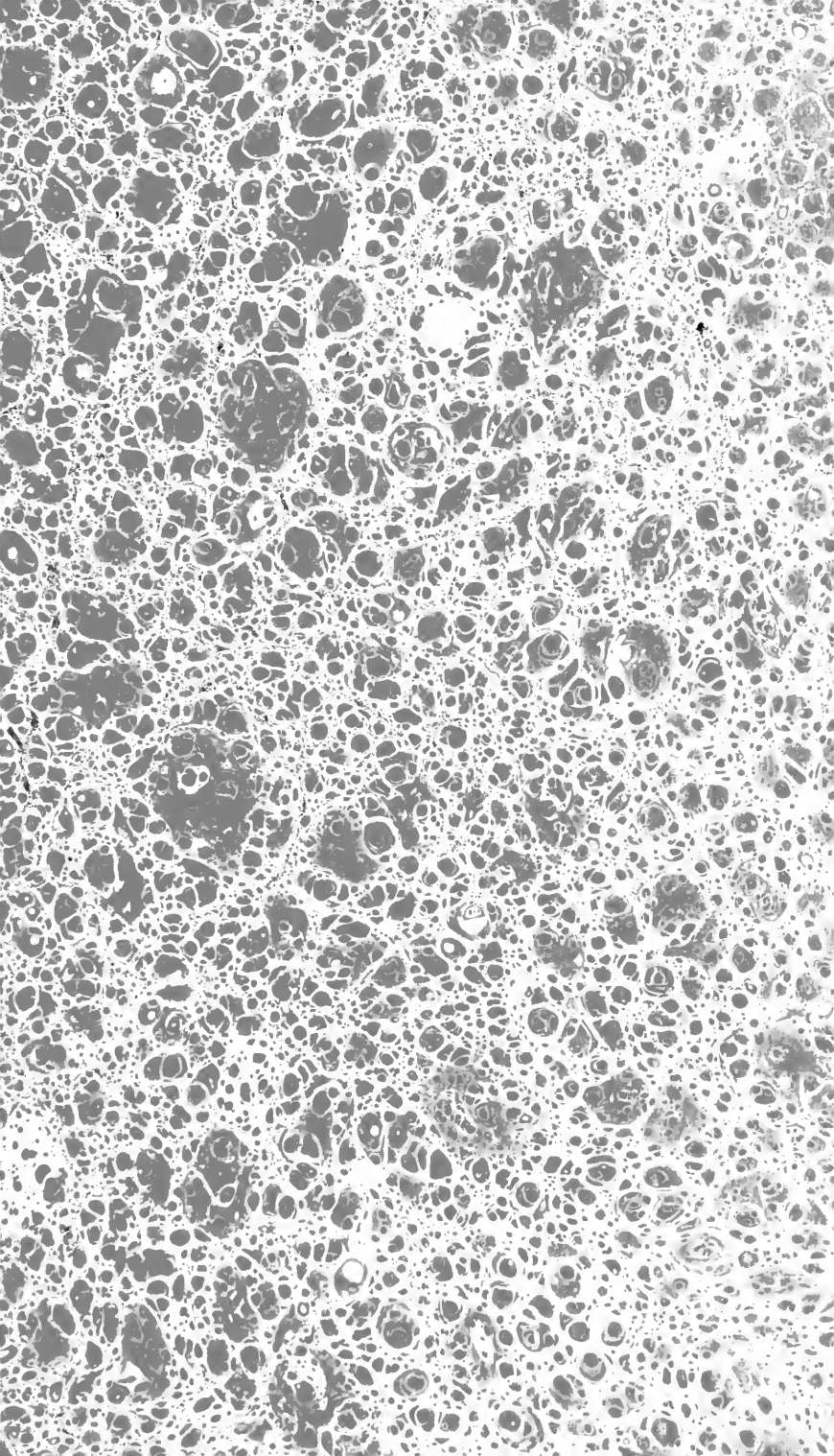


A  
A  
0  
0  
0  
0  
3  
2  
8  
5  
0  
2  
0



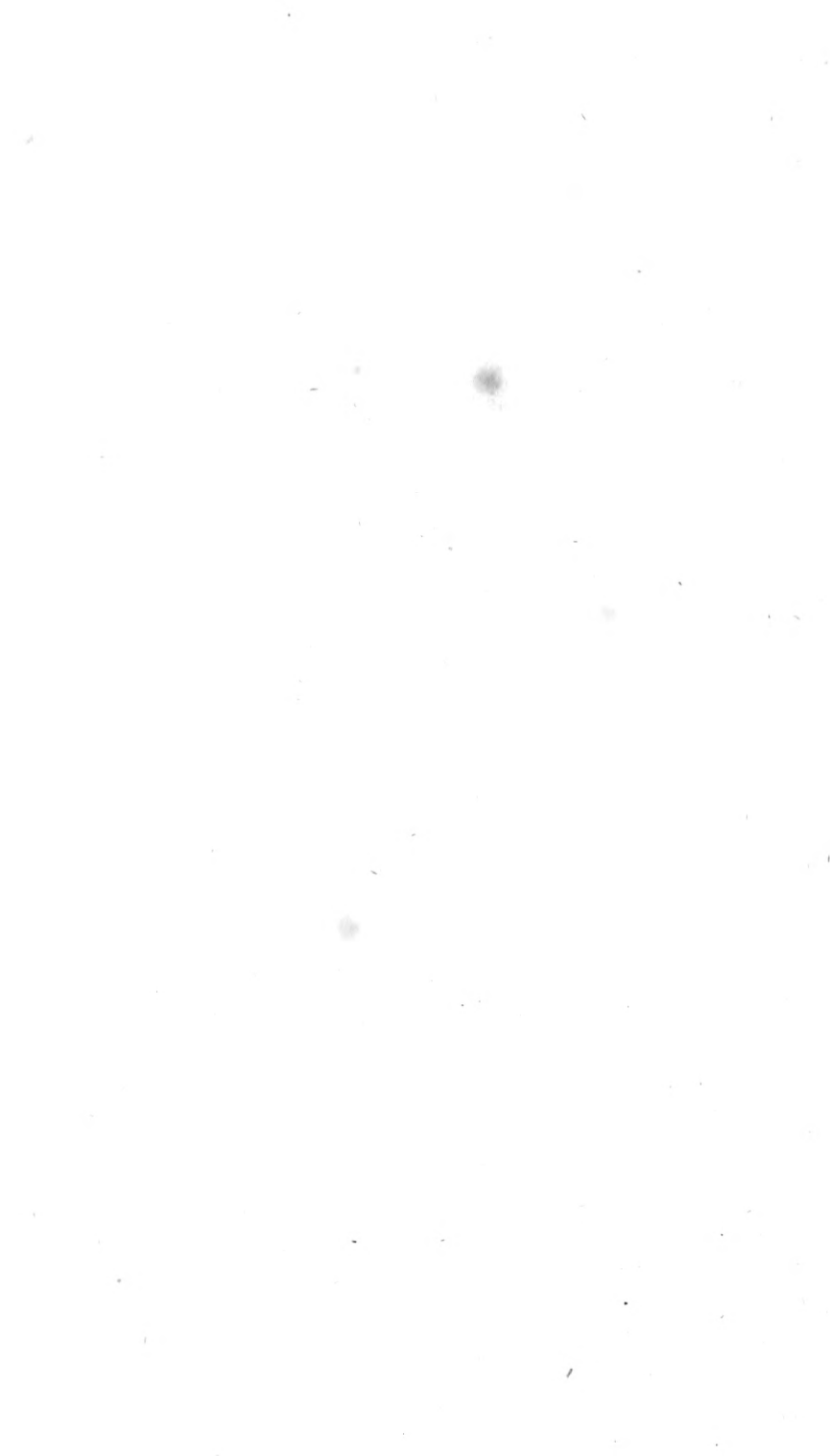








Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation







THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN,

FROM THE  
FIRST INVASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS UNDER  
JULIUS CÆSAR.

WRITTEN ON A NEW PLAN.

---

BY ROBERT HENRY, D.D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDINBURGH, MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIANS  
OF SCOTLAND, AND OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

---

THE SIXTH EDITION.  
IN TWELVE VOLUMES.  
VOL. IV.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. AND J. ALLMAN, PRINCE'S STREET, HANOVER SQUARE; W.  
BAYNES AND SON, PATERNOSTER ROW; A. B. DULAU AND CO. SOHO SQUARE;  
C. SMITH, STRAND; W. WRIGHT, FLEET STREET; WESTLEY AND PARRISH,  
STRAND; JOHN ANDERSON, JUN. EDINBURGH; M. KEENE AND JOHN  
CUMMING, DUBLIN.

---

1823.

J. G. Barnard, Skinner Street, London.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FOURTH VOLUME.

---

BOOK II. Continued.

CHAP. IV.

<i>History of Learning in Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449. to the landing of William Duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.</i>	- - - - -	Page 1
---	-----------	--------

CHAP. V.

<i>History of the Arts in Great Britain, during the same period,</i>	- - - - -	93
--	-----------	----

CHAP. VI.

<i>History of Commerce, Coin, and Shipping, in Great Britain, during the same period,</i>	-	191
---	---	-----

CHAP. VII.

<i>History of the Manners, Virtues, Vices, remarkable Customs, Language, Dress, Dict, and Diversions of the People of Great Britain, during the same period,</i>	- - - - -	287
--	-----------	-----

## APPENDIX TO BOOK II.

- NUMBER I.—A map of Britain, according to the Saxon Chronicle, - - - - - Page 405
- NUMBER II.—The Saxon Names of places in the preceding map, in alphabetical order, with an explanation of their meaning, and their present English names, - - - - - ibid.
- NUMBER III.—A specimen of the most ancient Anglo-Saxon laws, translated from the original Saxon into English, - - - - - 415
- NUMBER IV.—Catalogue, Latin and English, of the works of Venerable Bede, - - - - - 420
- NUMBER V.—The Lord's Prayer in the Anglo-Saxon and other kindred languages derived from the ancient Gothic or Teutonic, viz. Franco-Theotisco, Cimbric, Belgic, Frisic, High-Dutch, Suevian, Swiss, Icelandic, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, - 431



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

---

BOOK II.

CHAP. IV.

THE HISTORY OF LEARNING IN GREAT BRITAIN, FROM  
THE ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS, A. D. 449. TO THE  
LANDING OF WILLIAM DUKE OF NORMANDY, A. D.  
1066.

THE history of learning, in unlearned ages, (like those we are now delineating), is naturally a barren and unpleasant subject, and can hardly be rendered both entertaining and instructive by any art. If the author contents himself with general observations, his work will not be instructive or satisfactory to the inquisitive; and if he enters deep into critical investigations, it will become tedious to the bulk of readers. In a general history, where learning is only one of many subjects introduced, it

Cent. V.

Plan of this chapter.

Cent. V. seems most advisable to steer a middle course, and endeavour to give as much satisfaction to the learned as possible, without disgusting others. It will be necessary, also, to prevent confusion in this period, (which is long, as well as dark), to divide it into the several centuries of which it consisted; giving a concise account of the state of learning,—of the most learned men,—and of the chief seminaries of learning,—in each of these centuries, in their natural order.

State of  
learning  
from A. D.  
449. to  
A. D. 500.

After learning had flourished in provincial Britain, from the end of the first to the middle of the fourth century, it then began to decline, and by various means (mentioned in the conclusion of the fourth chapter of the first book of this work) was reduced to a very languishing state, before the arrival of the Saxons \*. A few of the unhappy Britons, amidst all the calamities of their country, retained a love to learning, and endeavoured to cherish the expiring light of science; but their history is so blended with fables, by the ignorant zeal of those dark ages, in which nothing was thought great that was not incredible, that it is impossible to discover the real extent of their knowledge. How many strange stories, for example, are told of the birth, prophecies, and magical feats of the famous Merlin, which are not worth repeating, and proceeded from nothing but his possessing a greater degree of knowledge than his cotemporaries †.

\* See vol. 2. p. 93, 94.

† Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 42.

The same may be said of Melchin, Magan, and several other British philosophers; who, having received their education in the Roman schools, were admired as magicians by their countrymen\*. They knew more indeed of mechanics, natural philosophy, astronomy, and some other parts of learning, than the age in which they lived was commonly acquainted with; though it is very probable, that their knowledge was not extensive. Some few of the Christian clergy also among the Britons, at this time, were a little more learned, or rather less ignorant, than their brethren, which hath procured them a place in the annals of their country. Among these, Illutus a presbyter, and Dubricius a bishop, both disciples of St Germanus, were most distinguished. These two, by the direction of their master, established schools for the education of youth; in which they presided, with great honour to themselves and advantage to their country. Dubricius had the chief care of two of these seminaries of learning, situated at Hentland and Mochrhos, on the river Wye, and so well frequented, that they sometimes contained no fewer than a thousand students. Illutus taught with equal success and reputation, at a place, from him called *Lant-wit*, near Boverton in Glamorganshire. In these schools, many of the greatest saints, and most eminent prelates of those times, received their education †.

\* Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 41, 49.

† Carte's Hist. v. 1. p. 185, &c.

Cent. V.

It is in vain to seek for learning, or learned men, among the Saxons, at their arrival in Britain. For though they were not absolute strangers to the use of letters; yet, like all the other northern nations, they were so much addicted to plundering and piratical expeditions, that they utterly despised the peaceful pursuits of science\*. Their arrival, therefore, in this island, was so far from being favourable to the cause of learning, that the very last sparks of it were almost quite extinguished in all those parts of it where their arms prevailed; in which the most profound darkness reigned, till after the introduction of Christianity.

State of  
learning in  
the sixth  
century  
among the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

England was a scene of so much confusion and misery in the sixth century, that learning could not be cultivated in it with any success. For during the whole course of that century, war raged with little intermission, the sword was hardly ever sheathed, and the ancient inhabitants, after a long and bloody struggle, were either extirpated, enslaved, or expelled their country. A great part of Britain had indeed been conquered by the Romans; but these polite and beneficent conquerors instructed and improved those whom they had subdued. The Saxons, being a fierce, illiterate people, acted a very different part, and their destructive progress was marked with darkness and desolation. These observations are so true, that there was not so much as one person

\* Hiccsii Thesaur. Præfat. ad. l. 2.

possessed of any degree of literary fame who flourished in England in the sixth century. In this dismal period, therefore, we must look for any little glimmerings of science that were still left in Britain, among the mountains of Wales and Caledonia.

Great numbers of British young men received a learned education in the schools established by Dubricius and Illutus; but despairing of encouragement, or even safety, at home, the greatest part of them abandoned their native country, and settled in different places of the continent, but chiefly in Britanny, where some of them were advanced to the highest stations in the church. One of the most illustrious of these was Samson, who became Archbishop of Dole, and is said to have been one of the most learned, as well as pious prelates, of the age in which he lived \*. Those scholars of Dubricius and Illutus who remained in Britain, prevented the total extinction of literature in this island, and are on that account entitled to a place in history; though we have no reason to suppose that their erudition was very great. Gildas the historian was one of these, and is the only British author of the sixth century whose works are published †. He was so much admired in the dark age in which he flourished, that he obtained the appellation of *Gildas the Wise*, though his works do not seem to entitle

Cent. VI.

Among  
the other  
British na-  
tions.

\* Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 69.

† Histor. Britan. Script. a Gale edit. t. 1. p. 5.

Cent. VI. him to that distinction. His history of Britain is a very short jejune performance, only valuable for its antiquity, and from our total want of better information. His satirical epistle concerning the British princes and clergy of his own times, discovers him to have been a man of a gloomy, querulous disposition; for it is hardly possible to believe that they were all such odious miscreants as he represents them. The style of both these works is very involved and tumid, and must give us a very unfavourable idea of the taste of that age in which such a writer was admired. St Theleaus; St David, the first bishop of Menevia, from him called *St David's*; St Asaph, the first bishop of the see of that name; Daniel, the first bishop of Bangor, and several other saints and bishops who flourished in Wales in this century, are said to have been eminent for their learning as well as piety; and they probably were so, according to the measure and taste of the times in which they lived.

Among the  
Scots.


It hath been keenly disputed by the Scotch and Irish antiquaries, whether Columbanus, a learned monk and writer of the sixth century, was born in Scotland or Ireland \*. The truth seems to be, that there were two of that name, the one an Irishman, and bishop of Laghlin; the other a Scotchman, founder of the abbey of Luxevill in France, and of that of Bobio in

\* Vide Leland, Bale, Pits de Script. Britan. Ware de Script. Hiber.  
t. I. Mackenzie's Scotch Writers, p. 17.



Italy. This last was educated in the famous monastery of Iona; from whence he went into France, A.D. 589, accompanied by twelve other monks, and there founded the abbey of Luxevill, near Besançon, which he governed about twenty years with great reputation. When he was in this station, he was attacked by the Pope, Gregory the Great, for observing Easter at a different time from the church of Rome, and wrote several letters and tracts in defence of his own practice, and that of his country. He composed, for the government of his own monks, a system of laws, which were so severe, that if any of them smiled in the time of divine service, he was to receive fifty lashes with a whip. By another of these laws, his monks were obliged to meet three times every night in the church, and at each time to sing thirty-six psalms and twelve anthems. If they regularly observed this rule, they would not be much disposed to smile. Theodoric King of France was for some time a great admirer of Columbanus; but that austere abbot at length offended him so much by the severity of his reproofs, that the prince obliged him to quit the kingdom. After spending a few years in Switzerland, in labouring, with some success, to convert the people to Christianity, he retired in his old age into Lombardy, where he founded the abbey of Bobio, in which he died A. D. 615 \*. It seems to be quite unnecessary to swell this part

\* Mackenzie's Scotch Writers, p. 17. Murat. Antiq. t. 3. p. 826.

Cent. VI.  of our work with a more particular account of the literati of this most unhappy and benighted age; for though some of them might be men of real genius, yet the wretched taste of the times in which they lived, the great difficulty of procuring good books and good masters, with many other disadvantages under which they laboured, prevented their arriving at much excellence in any of the sciences. The truth is, that the only parts of learning that were much cultivated by the British and Scotch clergy of this century were, the Latin language, polemical divinity, and ecclesiastical law; and a very small portion of these was sufficient to procure any one the character of a very learned man.


State, of  
learning in  
the seventh  
century  
among the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, in the course of the seventh century, contributed not a little to enlighten their minds, and promote the interests of learning, as well as of religion in England. Before that event, there was no such thing as learning, or any means of obtaining it, in that part of Britain which they inhabited, which was involved in the most profound darkness. Their ancient religion was gross and irrational in its principles, cruel and sanguinary in its ceremonies, and had a tendency to inspire them with nothing but a brutal contempt of death, and a savage delight in war. As long, therefore, as they continued in the belief and practice of that wretched superstition, they seem to have been incapable either of science or civility; but by their conversion to Chris-



tianity, they became accessible to both. It must Cent. VII.  
indeed be confessed, that the system of Chris-  
tianity in which the Anglo-Saxons were in-  
structed at their conversion was far from being  
pure and genuine ; but still it contained many  
valuable discoveries, concerning the perfections  
and providence of the one living and true God,  
—the nature of religious worship,—and the  
rules of moral conduct, to which they had been  
absolute strangers. By their embracing Chris-  
tianity, they were naturally led to inquiries and  
speculations on these and various other subjects,  
which could not fail both to enlighten and en-  
large their minds, and render them capable both  
of literary and religious improvements. Before  
their conversion to Christianity, the Anglo-  
Saxons seem to have had little or no intercourse  
except in the way of hostility, with any other  
nations who could instruct or civilize them ; but  
by that event a friendly communication was  
opened between them and Rome, which was  
then the chief seat of learning in Europe\*.  
Besides all this, such of the first Anglo-Saxon  
converts as designed to embrace the clerical pro-  
fession, (of which there were many), were obliged  
to apply to some parts of learning, to qualify  
themselves for that office ; and it became neces-  
sary to provide schools for their instruction. The  
truth of these observations is confirmed by many  
unquestionable facts, which prove that the Eng-

\* Murator. Antiq. t. 3. p. 810.

Cent. VII.  lish began to pay some attention to learning, (which they had before neglected), as soon as they were converted to Christianity. The first Christian king in England, was the first English legislator who committed his laws to writing \*. Sigbert King of the East-Angles, immediately after his conversion, founded a famous school for the education of youth in his dominions, A. D. 630, after the model of those which he had seen in France, and at Canterbury, whence he brought teachers †. In a word, some of the English clergy, in the end of this and in the next century, became famous for their learning, and were admired by all Europe as prodigies of erudition ‡. So great and happy a change did the introduction of Christianity, though not in its purest form, produce in the mental improvements of our ancestors.

Life of  
Aldhelm.

Though the English began to apply to learning in the former part of the seventh century, yet it was near the conclusion of it before any of them acquired much literary fame. Aldhelm, a near relation, if not the nephew, of Ina King of the West-Saxons, was the first who did so. Having received the first part of his education in the school which one Macdulf, a learned Scot, had set up in the place where Malmsbury now stands, he travelled into France and Italy

\* Wilkin's *Leges Saxon.*

† *Bed. Hist. Eccles.*

‡ *Murator. Antiq. t. 3. col. 618. Bruckeri, Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 574.*

for his improvement\*. At his return home, Cent. VII.  
 he studied some time under Adrian abbot of  
 St Augustin's in Canterbury, the most learned  
 professor of the sciences who had ever been in  
 England †. In these different seminaries he ac-  
 quired a very uncommon stock of knowledge,  
 and became famous for his learning, not only in  
 England, but in foreign countries; whence se-  
 veral learned men sent their writings for his  
 perusal and correction; particularly prince Ar-  
 cibil, a son of the king of Scotland, who wrote  
 many pieces, which he sent to Aldhelm, "in-  
 treating him to give them the last polish, by  
 "rubbing off their Scotch rust ‡." He was  
 the first Englishman who wrote in the Latin  
 language both in prose and verse; and compos-  
 ed a book for the instruction of his countrymen  
 in the prosody of that language. Besides this,  
 he wrote several other treatises on various sub-  
 jects; some of which are lost, and others publish-  
 ed by Martin Delrio and Canisius §. Venerable  
 Bede, who flourished in the end of this and the  
 beginning of the next century, gives the follow-  
 ing character of Aldhelm: "He was a man of  
 "universal erudition, having an elegant style,  
 "and being wonderfully well acquainted with  
 "books, both on philosophical and religious sub-  
 "jects ¶." King Alfred the Great declared, that  
 Aldhelm was the best of all the Saxon poets;

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 2, 3.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Id. ibid.

§ Cave Hist. Literar. Scul. A. D. 680.

¶ Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 18.

Cent. VII. and that a favourite song, which was universally  
 sung in his time, near two hundred years after  
 its author's death, was of his composition \*.  
 When he was abbot of Malmsbury, having a fine  
 voice, and great skill in music as well as poetry,  
 and observing the backwardness of his barbarous  
 countrymen to listen to grave instructions, he  
 composed a number of little poems, which he  
 sung to them after mass in the sweetest man-  
 ner; by which they were gradually instructed  
 and civilized †. After this excellent person had  
 governed the monastery of Malmsbury, of which  
 he was the founder, about thirty years, he was  
 made Bishop of Shereburn, where he died;  
 A. D. 709 ‡.

Life of  
 Theodore.

Though Theodore, who was advanced to the  
 archbishopric of Canterbury, A. D. 668, was not  
 an Englishman by birth; yet, as he contributed  
 so much to the introduction and improvement of  
 learning in England, he merits our grateful re-  
 membrance in this place. This excellent pre-  
 late, who was a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, and  
 one of the most learned men of his age, being  
 promoted by the Pope to the government of the  
 infant church of England, and informed of the  
 gross and general ignorance of the people of  
 that country, resolved to promote the interest of  
 useful learning amongst them, as the most ef-  
 fectual means of promoting that of true reli-

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 4.

‡ Id. *ibid.* p. 23.

† Id. *ibid.* p. 9.

gion. With this view he brought with him from Cent. VII.  
 Rome a valuable collection of books, and several professors of the sciences, particularly Abbot Adrian, to assist him in the education of the English youth\*. This scheme, as we learn from Bede, was crowned with the greatest success. “ These two great men (Theodore and Adrian), “ excelling in all parts of sacred and civil learning, collected a great multitude of scholars, “ whom they daily instructed in the sciences, “ reading lectures to them on poetry, astronomy, “ and arithmetic, as well as on divinity and the “ holy scriptures †.”

The circle of the sciences that were taught Sciences studied in this century.  
 and studied in England in the seventh century, when learning was in its infancy, we cannot suppose to have been very large, though it was not really so confined as we might, on a superficial view, imagine. Grammar, particularly that of the Greek and Latin languages, was taught and studied with much diligence and no little success. Venerable Bede assures us, that he had conversed with some of the scholars of Theodore and Adrian, who understood Greek and Latin as well as they did their native tongue ‡. It is evident from the works of Aldhelm, which are still extant, that he had read the most celebrated authors of Greece and Rome, and that he was no contemptible critic

\* Cave Hist. Lit. Sec. 7. Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 2.

† Bed. Hist. Eccl. 1. 4. c. 2.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

Cent. VII. in the languages in which these authors wrote.

— The testimony of a cotemporary, well acquainted with the subject, is always most satisfactory, when it can be obtained; and therefore the reader will not be displeased with the following account, given by Aldhelm himself, in a letter to Hedda bishop of Winchester, of the sciences which he and others studied in the school of Canterbury. “ I confess, most reverend father, “ that I had resolved, if circumstances would “ permit, to spend the approaching Christmas “ in the company of my relations, and to enjoy, for some time, the felicity of your conversation. But since I now find it will be “ impossible for me to accomplish that design, “ for various reasons, which the bearer of this “ letter will communicate, I hope you will have “ the goodness to excuse my not waiting upon “ you as I intended. The truth is, that there “ is a necessity for spending a great deal of time “ in this seat of learning, especially for one who “ is inflamed with the love of reading, and is “ earnestly desirous, as I am, of being intimately acquainted with all the secrets of the “ Roman jurisprudence. Besides, there is another study in which I am engaged, which is “ still more tedious and perplexing,—to make “ myself master of all the rules of a hundred “ different kinds of verses, and of the musical “ modulations of words and syllables. This “ study is rendered more difficult, and almost “ inextricable, by the great scarcity of able

“ teachers. But it would far exceed the bounds Cent. VII.  
“ of a familiar letter to explain this matter }  
“ fully, and lay open all the secrets of the art  
“ of metre, concerning letters, syllables, poetic  
“ feet and figures, verses, tones, time, &c.  
“ Add to this the doctrine of the seven divi-  
“ sions of poetry, with all their variations, and  
“ what number of feet every different kind of  
“ verse must consist of. The perfect knowledge  
“ of all this, and several other things of the like  
“ kind, cannot, I imagine, be acquired in a  
“ short space of time. But what shall I say of  
“ arithmetic, whose long and intricate calcula-  
“ tions are sufficient to overwhelm the mind,  
“ and throw it into despair? For my own part,  
“ all the labour of my former studies, by which  
“ I had made myself a complete master of se-  
“ veral sciences, was trifling, in comparison of  
“ what this cost me ; so that I may say with St  
“ Jerome, upon a similar occasion,—Before I  
“ entered upon that study, I thought myself a  
“ master ; but then I found I was but a learner.  
“ —However, by the blessing of God, and as-  
“ siduous reading, I have at length overcome  
“ the greatest difficulties, and found out the  
“ method of calculating suppositions, which are  
“ called the parts of a number. I believe it  
“ will be better to say nothing at all of astro-  
“ nomy, the zodiac, and its twelve signs re-  
“ volving in the heavens, which require a long  
“ illustration, than to disgrace that noble art by  
“ too short and imperfect an account ; especially

Cent. VII. “ as there are some parts of it, as astrology, and  
 { “ the perplexing calculation of horoscopes, which  
 “ require the hand of a master to do them just-  
 “ tice \*.” This account of the studies of the  
 youth of England who applied to learning, as it  
 was written by one of themselves, exactly eleven  
 hundred years ago, is really curious, though we  
 have no reason to conclude that it contains a  
 complete enumeration of all the sciences that  
 were then cultivated in England, but only of  
 those in the study of which the writer was then  
 engaged. Archbishop Theodore read lectures  
 on medicine; but Bede hath preserved one of  
 his doctrines, which doth not serve to give us a  
 very high idea of his knowledge in that art, viz.  
 “ That it was very dangerous to perform phlebo-  
 “ tomy on the fourth day of the moon; because  
 “ both the light of the moon, and the tides of  
 “ the sea, were then upon the increase †.” Mu-  
 sic, logic, rhetoric, &c. were then taught and  
 studied; but in so imperfect a manner, that it is  
 unnecessary to be more particular in our account  
 of them.

Seminaries  
 of learning.

As the youth in those parts of England which  
 had embraced the Christian religion, began to  
 apply to learning with some eagerness in the se-  
 venth century, several schools were then esta-  
 blished for their instruction. One of the most  
 illustrious of those schools was that of Canter-  
 bury, founded by Augustin, the apostle of the

\* Anglia Sacra. t. 2. p. 6, 7.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 3.




English, and his companions, and greatly improved by Archbishop Theodore \*. In this school a library was also founded, and enriched from time to time with many valuable books, brought from Rome by Augustin, Theodore, and others: and here the greatest part of the prelates and abbots who flourished in England in this century received their education. Sigbert, who was advanced to the throne of East-Anglia, A. D. 631, having lived some years an exile in France, was there converted to Christianity, and instructed in several branches of learning, for which he had a taste. After his accession to the throne of his ancestors, he laboured with great earnestness to promote the conversion and instruction of his subjects. With this view, he instituted a school in his dominions, in imitation of those which he had seen in France and at Canterbury; from which last place he was furnished with professors by Archbishop Honorius, who approved of the design †. As the place where this ancient seminary of learning was established is not mentioned by Bede, it hath been the occasion of a controversy between the two famous universities of England; the advocates for the superior antiquity of the one contending that it was at Cambridge, while those who favour the other think it more probable that it was at Dumnoc (Dunwich), which was the

Cent. VII.



\* Bedæ Opera a J. Smith edita, Append. No. 14.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 1<sup>re</sup>.

Cent. VII. capital of that little kingdom, and also the seat of its bishops \*. “Non nostrum est tantas com-  
 ponere lites.” The learned reader would be surprised, if he heard nothing in this place of the two famous schools of Creeklade and Lechlade, which are said to have been founded by the companions of Brute the Trojan, to have flourished through many ages, and to have been transferred to Oxford, (nobody can tell how or when), and to have given birth to that celebrated university †. But it would be very improper to swell this work with a heap of fabulous tales, equally absurd and contradictory. Several monasteries were founded in different parts of England in the course of this century; and in each of these a school was opened for the education of youth: so that, as Bede observes, “these were happy and enlightened times, in comparison of those which had preceded them; for none wanted teachers who were willing to be instructed ‡.” In one of these monasteries, Bede himself, the great luminary of England, and of the Christian world, in the end of this and beginning of the next century, had his education.

Learned  
 Britons  
 and Scots.

The state of learning among the Scots and Britons was much the same in this as it had been in the former century; and several persons not

\* Bed. Hist. Eccles. 1. 3. c. 18. Append. No. 14.

† A. Wood, Hist. Univ. Oxon. p. 4—6.

‡ Bed. Hist. Eccles. 1. 4. c. 2.

unlearned, according to the measure of the times Cent. VII.  
in which they lived, flourished in both countries  
in this period. Dinothus, who was abbot of the  
famous monastery of Bangor in Flintshire, and  
flourished in the beginning of this century, is  
said to have been a man of uncommon eloquence  
and learning; and as such was chosen by the  
British clergy to be their advocate in a con-  
ference with Augustin Archbishop of Canterbury,  
and his clergy, A. D. 601; a choice which  
seems to have been well made. When Augustin  
pressed the British clergy to make their submis-  
sions to the Pope, and acknowledge himself as  
their archbishop, Dinothus replied, with much  
spirit and good sense, “ Be it known unto you  
“ with certainty, that we are all willing to be  
“ obedient and subject to the church of God, to  
“ the Pope of Rome, and to every good Chris-  
“ tian, as far as to love every one in his degree,  
“ in perfect charity, and to help every one of  
“ them by word and deed to be the children of  
“ God; and other obedience than this I do not  
“ know to be due to him whom ye call the  
“ pope; and this obedience we are ready to pay  
“ to him, and to every Christian, continually.  
“ Besides, we are already under the government  
“ of the Bishop of Caerleon, who is our spi-  
“ ritual guide under God\*.” Nennius Abbot  
of Banchor, who wrote a history of the Britons,  
which hath been often printed, Kentegern,

\* Spelman. Concil. t. 1. b. 108.

Cent. VII. founder of the church of Glasgow, and several  
others of the same class, flourished among the Scots and Britons in this century; but none of them appear to have been so eminent for their learning as to merit a place in the general history of their country. It is only proper to observe, that after the destruction of the famous monastery of Banchor, A. D. 613, which had been a kind of university for the education of the British youth, learning declined very sensibly among the posterity of the ancient Britons; which, together with the increasing miseries of their country, is the reason that we shall henceforth meet with very few of that unhappy people who were eminent for their learning.

Scarcity  
of books  
in this  
century.


One thing that greatly retarded the progress of learning among the English, and made the acquisition of literary knowledge extremely difficult in this century, was the prodigious scarcity of books, which had been either carried away by the Romans, or so entirely destroyed by the Scots, Picts, and Saxons, that it is a little uncertain whether there was so much as one book left in England before the arrival of Augustin. Nor was this deficiency easily supplied, as there was a necessity of bringing them all from foreign countries, and chiefly from Rome, where they could not be procured without great difficulty, and a most incredible expence. One example will be sufficient to give the reader some idea of the price of books in England in this century. Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of

Weremouth in Northumberland, made no fewer Cent. VII.  
 than five journies to Rome to purchase books,  
 vessels, vestments, and other ornaments, for his  
 monastery; by which he collected a very va-  
 luable library; for one book out of which, (a  
 volume on cosmography), King Alfred gave  
 him an estate of eight hides, or as much land as  
 eight ploughs could labour\*. This bargain was  
 concluded by Benedict with the king a little be-  
 fore his death, A. D. 690; and the book was de-  
 livered, and the estate received by his successor,  
 Abbot Ceolfred. At this rate, none but kings,  
 bishops, and abbots, could be possessed of any  
 books; which is the reason that there were then  
 no schools but in kings' palaces, bishops' seats,  
 or monasteries. This was also one reason why  
 learning was then wholly confined to princes,  
 priests, and a very few of the chief nobility.

The eighth century seems, upon the whole, to Cent. VIII.  
 have been the most dark and dismal part of that State of  
 long night of ignorance and barbarism that suc- learning on  
 ceeded the fall of the Roman empire. This is the conti-  
 acknowledged by all the writers of literary his- nent in the  
 tory, who represent the nations on the continent eighth cen-  
 as in danger of sinking into the savage state, tury.  
 and losing the small remains of learning that  
 had hitherto subsisted amongst them†. Even  
 at Rome, which had long been the seat of learn-  
 ing as well as empire, the last glimmerings of

\* Bed. Hist. Abbat. Wermuthen. edit. a J. Smith, p. 297, 8.

† Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 571.

Cent. VIII.  the lamp of science were on the point of expiring, and the pretended literati wrote in the most barbarous manner, without regarding the plainest rules of grammar, using such phrases as these: *Ut inter cis dissensio fiat, et divisis inveniantur*,—*Una cum omnes Benebentani*\*, &c. France was still in a worse condition, if possible, in this respect; for when Charlemagne, as we are told by one of his historians, began to attempt the restoration of learning, A. D. 787, the study of the liberal arts had quite ceased in that kingdom, and he was obliged to bring all his teachers from other countries†. We may judge, that the state of learning in Spain, at this time, was no better, by their being obliged to make canons against ordaining men priests or bishops, who could neither read nor sing psalms‡. This deplorable decline of learning on the continent, was partly owing to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy, and the incursions of the Saracens in France and Spain, and partly to a wrong turn that had been given to the studies of the clergy in all these countries. Ever since the reformation that had been made in the music of the church by Gregory the Great, in the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, great attention had been given to that art, till by degrees it became almost the only thing to which the clergy applied, to the total neglect of all severer studies. A great number of treatises

\* Murator. Antiq. t. 3. p. 811.

† Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 571.

‡ Id. ibid.

were written by the fathers of the church on Cent. VIII.  
 this subject, and the best singer was esteemed  
 the most learned man\*. When Charlemagne  
 visited Rome, A. D. 786, the French clergy in  
 his retinue were so proud of their own singing,  
 that they challenged the Roman clergy to a mu-  
 sical combat. The Romans, after calling the  
 French fools, rustics, blockheads, and many  
 other ill names, accepted the challenge, and ob-  
 tained a complete victory, to the great mortifi-  
 cation of their antagonists †.

When the muses were thus expelled from all  
 the countries on the continent, they found an State of  
 learning in  
 England in  
 this century.  
 asylum in the British Isles, where several persons  
 applied to the study of the sciences with great  
 ardour, and no little success. The schools esta-  
 blished by Archbishop Theodore at Canterbury,  
 and by King Sigbert in East-Anglia, had pro-  
 duced some good scholars; who, being advanced  
 to the highest stations, both in church and state,  
 became great encouragers of learning; which,  
 having all the charms of novelty, was pursued  
 by several ingenious men with uncommon dili-  
 gence. Ina King of Wessex, Offa King of Mer-  
 cia, Aldfrid King of Northumberland, and se-  
 veral other princes who flourished in this period,  
 were great patrons of learning and learned men,  
 who enjoyed much tranquillity, and were fur-  
 nished with books, in the monasteries that were

\* Fabricii Biblioth. Lat. t. 1. p. 644.

† Launoïus de Scholis Celeb. c. 1. p. 3.

Cent. VIII. then founded. All these circumstances con-  
ring, occasioned a transient gleam of light to  
arise in England in the eighth century; which,  
it must be confessed, would not have appeared  
very bright, if it had not been both preceded  
and followed by such profound darkness. It  
was to this period that Alfred the Great alludes,  
in the following passages of his famous letter to  
Wulfseg Bishop of London: "I must inform  
" you, my dear friend, that I often revolve in  
" my mind the many learned and wise men who  
" formerly flourished in the English nation, both  
" among the clergy and laity. How happy were  
" those times! Then the princes governed their  
" subjects with great wisdom, according to the  
" word of God, and became famous for their  
" wise and upright administration. Then the  
" clergy were equally diligent in reading, study-  
" ing, and teaching; and this country was so  
" famous for learning, that many came hither  
" from foreign parts to be instructed. Then  
" (before all was spoiled and burnt) the  
" churches and monasteries were filled with  
" libraries of excellent books in several lan-  
" guages.—When I reflected on this, I some-  
" times wondered that those learned men, who  
" were spread over all England, had not trans-  
" lated the best of these books into their native  
" tongue. But then I presently answered my-  
" self, that those wise men could not imagine  
" that ever learning would be so much neglected  
" as to make this necessary, and believed that



“ the more languages were understood, the more Cent. VIII. learning would abound in any country \*.” To give the reader a just idea of the state of learning in this period, of which this great prince entertained so high an opinion, it will be necessary to give a short sketch of the personal history, and learned labours, of a few who were most eminent for their erudition, and from their works to collect what sciences were then cultivated, and to what degree of perfection they were brought.

Tobias Bishop of Rochester, who flourished in the beginning of this century, after having studied several years in the monastery of Glassonbury, finished his education at Canterbury, under Archbishop Theodore, and his coadjutor Abbot Adrian. In this famous school, as we are told by his cotemporary Bede, he made great proficiency in all parts of learning, both civil and ecclesiastical: and the Greek and Latin languages became as familiar to him as his native tongue †: an attainment not very common in more enlightened times. All the works of this learned prelate perished in the subsequent depredations of the Danes ‡.

Beda the presbyter, commonly called *venerable Bede*, though he never attained to any higher station in the church than that of a simple monk, was the great luminary of England, and of the

\* Spelman, Vita Elfredi, Append. No. 3. p. 196.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 23.

‡ Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 91.

Cent. VIII. Christian world, in this century. This excellent person was born at Weremouth, in the kingdom of Northumberland, A. D. 672, and educated in the monastery of St Peter, founded at that place about two years after his birth, by the famous Benedict Biscop, one of the most learned men and greatest travellers of his age \*. Bede enjoyed great advantages in this monastery for the acquisition of knowledge; having the use of an excellent library, which had been collected by the founder of his travels, and the assistance of the best masters. Abbot Benedict himself, Ceolfred his successor, and St John of Beverley, were all his preceptors, and took much pleasure in teaching one who profited so much by their instructions †. These favourable circumstances concurring with an excellent genius, an ardent thirst for knowledge, and unwearied diligence in the pursuit of it, enabled him to make uncommon progress. Being no less pious than he was learned, he was ordained a deacon in the nineteenth year of his age, by John of Beverly, then Bishop of Hexham, afterwards Archbishop of York. It seems to have been about this time that he removed from the monastery of St Peter's at Weremouth, where he had been educated, to that of St Paul's at Iarrow, near the mouth of the river Tyne, then newly founded by the same Benedict. In this monastery of Iarrow he spent

\* Bed. ad fin. Epitom. Hist. Eccles. et in Vita Abbat. Weremouth.

† Bale de Script. Britan. p. 94.

the remainder of his life, employing all his time Cent. VIII.  
 (as he himself acquaints us) in performing the  
 offices of devotion in the church, teaching, read-  
 ing, and writing \*. At the age of thirty, A. D.  
 702, he was ordained a priest by the same pious  
 prelate from whom he had received deacon's  
 orders †. Though Bede contented himself with  
 living in a humble station, in a little monastery,  
 and obscure corner of the world, the fame of his  
 learning had by this time spread over all Europe,  
 and the sovereign pontiff was desirous of his  
 company and advice in the government of the  
 church. This appears from the following pas-  
 sage of a letter from Pope Sergius to Ceolfred,  
 Abbot of Weremouth and Iarrow :—" Some  
 " questions have arisen concerning ecclesiastical  
 " affairs, which require the most serious exami-  
 " nation of men of the greatest learning. I there-  
 " fore beseech and require you, by the love of  
 " God, by your regard to religion, and by the  
 " obedience which you owe to the universal  
 " church, that you do not refuse to comply with  
 " our present requisition, but, without delay,  
 " send to the apostles Peter and Paul, and to me  
 " Beda, the pious servant of God, a presbyter  
 " in your monastery. You may depend upon  
 " it, that he shall be sent back to you, as soon  
 " as the solemnities of these consultations are  
 " happily ended. Consider, I beseech you, that  
 " whatever good may, on this occasion, be done

\* Bed. ad fin. Epit. Hist. Eccles.

† Id. ibid.

Cent. VIII. “ to the universal church, by means of his excellent wisdom, will redound particularly to the honour and advantage of you and your monastery \*.” A noble testimony of the high opinion that was entertained of the wisdom and learning of our humble presbyter in the court of Rome. It is evident, however, from Bede’s own testimony, that he did not go to Rome in consequence of this requisition, which was probably owing to the death of Pope Sergius, which happened soon after he had written the above letter†. The industry of this excellent person in acquiring knowledge was so very great, that he made himself master of every branch of literature that it was possible for any man to acquire in the age and circumstances in which he lived; nor was his diligence in communicating this knowledge, both to his cotemporaries and to posterity, less remarkable. This appears from the prodigious number of works which he composed, on so great a variety of subjects, that we may almost venture to affirm they contain all the learning that was then known in the world. These works have been often published in different cities of Europe, as Paris, Basil, Cologne, &c.; but never in any part of Britain, to which the author was so great an honour. The only complete edition of Bede’s works that I have had an opportunity of examining is that at Cologne, A. D.

\* G. Mahus. de Gest. Reg. Angl. l. 1. c. 3.

† See Biographia Britannica, artic. Bede.

1612, in eight volumes in folio. It would require a large work to give the reader even an imperfect idea of the erudition contained in these volumes; and therefore he must be contented with the catalogue of the several treatises contained in them, which he will find in the Appendix\*. This will at least make him acquainted with the subjects on which this great man employed his pen. Many writers, both ancient and modern, have bestowed the highest encomiums on the genius and learning of Bede. “How much (says one of the best judges of literary merit) was Beda distinguished amongst the British monks, who, to say the truth, was not only the most learned of them, but, the age in which he lived considered, of the whole western world †.” This character, so honourable to Bede, is confirmed by many persons of the greatest name in the republic of letters; while some few have spoke of him in a strain not quite so favourable ‡. But these last appear plainly not to have considered the state of the times in which he lived, and the disadvantages under which he laboured, comparing him, not with his own cotemporaries, but with the learned men of the last and present century, which is unjust. After this modest and humble presbyter, the great ornament of his age and of his country, had spent a long life in the diligent pursuit and communication of useful knowledge, and in the

\* Append. No. 4.

† Conrin. de Antiquit. Acad. Dissert. 3.


‡ Biograph. Britan. art. Beda, not. N. O.

Cent. VIII practice of every virtue, he died in his cell at Iarrow, in a most devout and pious manner, May 26. A. D. 735 \*. The greatest blemish, or rather weakness, of this great man, was his credulity, and too easy belief of the many legendary stories of miracles which he hath inserted in his ecclesiastical history: but this was so much the character of the age in which he lived, that it required more than human sagacity and strength of mind to guard against it. He was called *the wise Saxon* by his cotemporaries, and *venerable Beda* by posterity; and as long as great modesty, piety, and learning, united in one character, are the objects of veneration amongst mankind, the memory of Beda must be revered.

Decline of  
learning  
after the  
death of  
Bede.

The remarkable decline of learning in England after the death of Beda, is painted in very strong colours, by one of the best of our ancient historians. "The death of Beda was fatal to  
" learning, and particularly to history, in Eng-  
" land; insomuch that it may be said, that  
" almost all knowledge of past events was buried  
" in the same grave with him, and hath con-  
" tinued in that condition even to our times.  
" There was not so much as one Englishman  
" left behind him, who emulated the glory  
" which he had acquired by his studies, imitated  
" his example, or pursued the path to know-  
" ledge which he had pointed out. A few in-

\* Simeon Dunelm. l. 3. c. 7. W. Malms. l. 1. c. 3.

“ deed of his survivors were good men, and not Cent. VIII.  
 “ unlearned ; but they generally spent their   
 “ lives in an inglorious silence ; while the far  
 “ greatest numbersunk into sloth and ignorance,  
 “ until by degrees the love of learning was quite  
 “ extinguished in this island for a long time \*.”  
 Several other causes, besides the death of Beda,  
 contributed to bring on this deplorable ignorance  
 and neglect of learning ; particularly, frequent  
 civil wars, and the destructive depredations of the  
 Danes ; who, being Pagans, destroyed the monas-  
 teries, burnt their libraries, and killed or dispersed  
 the monks, who were the only students in those  
 unhappy times.

A few of the friends of Beda, who survived him, Lives of  
 supported the declining interests of learning for a Acca  
 little time, and on that account are entitled to a Bishop of  
 place in this part of our work. The most con- Hexham,  
 siderable of these was Acca Bishop of Hexham, and Eg-  
 and Egbert Archbishop of York. Both these bert Arch-  
 prelates were good scholars for the times in which bishop of  
 they flourished, generous patrons of learning and York.  
 learned men, and great collectors of books.  
 Acca excelled in the knowledge of the rites and  
 ceremonies of the church, and in church-music ;  
 both which branches of learning, then in the  
 highest esteem, he acquired at Rome †. Egbert,  
 who was brother to Eadbert King of Northum-  
 berland, founded a noble library at York, for

\* W. Malms. l. 1. c. 3.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 20.

Cent. VIII. the advancement of learning. Alcuinus, who  
 was his pupil, and the keeper of this library, speaks of it in several of his letters, as one of the most choice and valuable collections of books then in the world. In a letter to Eambald, a successor of Egbert in the see of York, he expresseth himself in this manner : “ I thank God, my most  
 “ dear son, that I have lived to see your exalta-  
 “ tion to the government of that church in which  
 “ I was educated, and to the custody of that  
 “ inestimable treasure of learning and wisdom  
 “ which my beloved master Archbishop Egbert  
 “ left to his successors \*”. “ O that I had (says  
 “ he in a letter to the Emperor Charlemagne)  
 “ the use of those admirable books on all parts  
 “ of learning which I enjoyed in my native  
 “ country, collected by the industry of my be-  
 “ loved master Egbert. May it please your  
 “ imperial Majesty, in your great wisdom, to  
 “ permit me to send some of our youth to  
 “ transcribe the most valuable books in that  
 “ library, and thereby transplant the flowers of  
 “ Britain into France †.” It may be some satisfaction to the learned reader to peruse the poetical catalogue of this ancient library, which he will find below ‡.

\* W. Malms. l. 1. c. 3.

† Id. ibid.

‡ *Alcuinus's Catalogue of Archbishop Egbert's library at York.*

Illic invenies veterum vestigia Patrum ;  
 Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,  
 Græcia vel quidquid transmisit clara Latinis :  
 Hæbraicus vel quod populus bibit imbre superno,



Alcuinus, the writer of these epistles, flourished in the latter part of this century, and was very famous for his genius and erudition. He was born in the north of England, and educated at York, under the direction of Archbishop Egbert, as we learn from his own letters, in which he frequently calls that great prelate his beloved master, and the clergy of York the companions of his youthful studies \*. As he survived venerable Bede about seventy years, it is hardly possible that he could have received any part of his education under him, as some writers of

Cent. VIII.

Life of  
Alcuinus.

Africa lucifluo vel quidquid lumine sparsit.  
 Quod Pater Hieronymus, quod sensit Hilarius, atque  
 Ambrosius Præsul, simul Augustinus, et ipse  
 Sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius edit avitus :  
 Quidquid Gregorius summus docet, et Leo Papa ;  
 Basilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque coruscant,  
 Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Johannes ;  
 Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda Magister,  
 Quæ Victorinus scripsere, Boëtius ; atque  
 Historici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipse  
 Acer Aristoteles, Rhetor atque Tullius ingens :  
 Quid quoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipse Juvenius ;  
 Alcuinus, et Clemens, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator,  
 Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius edunt ;  
 Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus, et auctor  
 Artis grammaticæ, vel quid scripsere magistri ;  
 Quid Probus atque Focas, Donatus, Priscianusve,  
 Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, Commenianus.  
 Invenies alios perplures, lector, ibidem  
 Egregios studiis, arte et sermone magistros,  
 Plurima qui claro scripsere volumina sensu :  
 Nomina sed quorum præsentī in carmine scribi  
 Longius est visum, quam plectri postulet usus.

*Alcuinus de Pontificibus et Sanctis Eccl. Ebor.  
 apud Gale, t. 1. p. 730.*

\* Epistolæ Alcuini, apud Lectiones Antiquas Canisii, t. 2. p. 409.

Cent. VIII. literary history have affirmed ; and it is worthy of observation, that he never calls that great man his master, though he speaks of him with the highest veneration \*. It is not well known to what preferments he had attained in the church before he left England, though some say he was Abbot of Canterbury †. The occasion of his leaving his native country, was his being sent on an embassy by Offa King of Mercia, to the Emperor Charlemagne, who contracted so great an esteem and friendship for him, that he earnestly solicited, and at length prevailed upon him to settle in his court, and become his preceptor in the sciences ‡. Alcuinus accordingly instructed that great prince in rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and divinity ; which rendered him one of his greatest favourites. “ He was treated with so much kindness and familiarity (says a cotemporary writer) by the Emperor, that the other courtiers called him, by way of eminence,—*the Emperor’s delight* ||.” Charlemagne employed his learned favourite to write several books against the heretical opinions of Felix Bishop of Urgel in Catalonia, and to defend the orthodox faith against that heresiarch, in the council of Francfort, A. D. 894 ; which he performed to the entire satisfaction of the Emperor and council, and even to the conviction of Felix and his followers, who abandoned their

\* Bale de Script. Britan. cent. 2. c. 17.

† Biograph. Britan. art. Alcuinus.

‡ W. Malms. 1. 1. c. 3.

|| Murat. Antiq. t. 1. p. 151.

errors \*. The Emperor consulted chiefly with <sup>cent. VIII.</sup> Alcuinus on all things relating to religion and learning, and, by his advice, did many great things for the advancement of both. An academy was established in the Imperial palace, over which Alcuinus presided, and in which the princes and prime nobility were educated; and other academies were established in the chief towns of Italy and France, at his instigation, and under his inspection†. “France,” says one of our best writers of literary history, “is indebted to Alcuinus for all the polite learning it boasted of in that and the following ages. The universities of Paris, Tours, Fulden, Soissons, and many others, owe to him their origin and increase; those of whom he was not the superior and founder, being at least enlightened by his doctrine and example, and enriched by the benefits he procured for them from Charlemagne‡.” After Alcuinus had spent many years in the most intimate familiarity with the greatest prince of his age, he at length, with great difficulty, obtained leave to retire from court to his abbey of St. Martin’s at Tours. Here he kept up a constant correspondence by letters with Charlemagne; from which it appears, that both the Emperor and his learned friend were animated with the most ardent love to learning and religion, and constantly employed in

\* Du Pin. Hist. Eccles. cent. 8.

† Crevier Hist. Universit. de Paris, t. 1. p. 26, &c.

‡ Cave Hist. Literar. sec. 8. p. 496.

Cent. VIII. contriving and executing the noblest designs for  
 their advancement \*. Some of these letters of  
 Alcuinus (which are directed to Charlemagne, under the name of King David, according to the custom of that age of giving Scripture names to princes) breathe so excellent a spirit, and throw so much light on the state of learning, that I cannot resist the inclination of laying one of them before the reader, in the following free translation, which I confess falls much short of the spirit and elegance of the original Latin :

Letter of  
 Alcuinus  
 to Charle-  
 magne.

“ To his most pious, excellent, and honoured  
 “ Lord, King David,  
 “ Flaccus Alcuinus wisheth everlasting health  
 “ and felicity in Christ.

“ The contemplation, O most excellent prince,  
 “ of that pure and virtuous friendship with which  
 “ you honour me, fills my mind at all times with  
 “ the most abundant comfort ; and I cherish in  
 “ my heart, as its most precious treasure, the  
 “ remembrance of your goodness, and the  
 “ image of that benign and gracious countenance  
 “ with which you entertain your friends. In my  
 “ retirement, it is the greatest joy of my life to  
 “ hear of your prosperity ; and therefore I have  
 “ sent this young gentleman to bring me an  
 “ exact account of your affairs, that I may have  
 “ reason to sing the loudest praises to my Lord  
 “ Jesus Christ for your felicity. But why do I

\* Epistolæ Alcuini, apud Antiq. Lection. Canisii, t. 2.

“ say that I may have reason ?—the whole Chris-<sup>Cent. VIII.</sup>  
“ tian world hath reason to praise Almighty  
“ God, with one voice, that he hath raised up  
“ so pious, wise, and just a prince, to govern  
“ and protect it in these most dangerous times ;  
“ a prince who makes it the whole joy of his  
“ heart, and business of his life, to suppress  
“ every thing that is evil, and promote every  
“ thing that is good ; to advance the glory of  
“ God, and spread the knowledge of the Chris-  
“ tian religion into the most distant corners of  
“ the world.

“ Persevere, O my most dear and amiable  
“ prince ! in your most honourable course, in  
“ making the improvement of your subjects in  
“ knowledge, virtue, and happiness, the great  
“ object of your pursuit ; for this shall redound  
“ to your glory and your felicity in the great  
“ day of the Lord, and in the eternal society of  
“ his saints. Such noble designs and glorious  
“ efforts, you may depend upon it, shall not go  
“ unrewarded ; for though the life of man is  
“ short, the goodness of God is infinite, and he  
“ will recompense our momentary toils with joys  
“ which shall never end. How precious then is  
“ time ! and how careful should we be, that we  
“ do not lose by our indolence those immortal  
“ felicities which we may obtain by the active  
“ virtues of a good life !

“ The employments of your Alcuinus in his  
“ retreat are suited to his humble sphere ; but  
“ they are neither inglorious nor unprofitable.

Cent. VIII. “ I spend my time in the halls of St Martin, in  
“ teaching some of the noble youths under my  
“ care the intricacies of grammar, and inspiring  
“ them with a taste for the learning of the an-  
“ cients ; in describing to others the order and  
“ revolutions of those shining orbs which adorn  
“ the azure vault of heaven ; and in explaining to  
“ others the mysteries of Divine wisdom, which  
“ are contained in the Holy Scriptures ; suiting  
“ my instructions to the views and capacities of  
“ my scholars, that I may train up many to be  
“ ornaments to the church of God, and to the  
“ court of Your Imperial Majesty. In doing  
“ this, I find a great want of several things, par-  
“ ticularly of those excellent books in all arts  
“ and sciences which I enjoyed in my native  
“ country, through the expence and care of my  
“ great master Egbert. May it therefore please  
“ Your Majesty, animated with the most ardent  
“ love of learning, to permit me to send some  
“ of our young gentlemen into England, to pro-  
“ cure for us those books which we want, and  
“ transplant the flowers of Britain into France,  
“ that their fragrance may no longer be confined  
“ to York, but may perfume the palaces of  
“ Tours.

“ I need not put Your Majesty in mind, how  
“ earnestly we are exhorted in the Holy Scriptures  
“ to the pursuit of wisdom ; than which nothing  
“ is more conducive to a pleasant, happy, and  
“ honourable life ; nothing a greater preservative  
“ from vice ; nothing more becoming or more

“ necessary to those especially, who have the ad-  
“ ministration of public affairs, and the govern-  
“ ment of empires. Learning and wisdom exalt  
“ the low, and give additional lustre to the ho-  
“ nours of the great. *By wisdom kings reign,*  
“ *and princes decree justice.* Cent. VIII.  
“ most gracious King! to press the young  
“ nobility of your court to the eager pursuit of  
“ wisdom and learning in their youth, that they  
“ may attain to an honourable old age, and a  
“ blessed immortality. For my own part, I  
“ will never cease, according to my abilities, to  
“ sow the seeds of learning in the minds of your  
“ subjects in these parts; mindful of the saying  
“ of the wisest man, *In the morning sow thy seed,*  
“ *and in the evening withhold not thine hand;*  
“ *for thou knowest not whether shall prosper,*  
“ *either this or that.* To do this hath been the  
“ most delightful employment of my whole life.  
“ In my youthful years, I sowed the seeds of learn-  
“ ing in the flourishing seminaries of my native  
“ soil of Britain, and in my old age I am doing  
“ the same in France; praying to God, that  
“ they may spring up and flourish in both coun-  
“ tries. I know also, O prince beloved of God,  
“ and praised by all good men! that you exert  
“ all your influence in promoting the interests  
“ of learning and religion; more noble in your  
“ actions than in your royal birth. May the Lord  
“ Jesus Christ preserve and prosper you in all  
“ your great designs, and at length bring you to

Cent. VIII. “ the enjoyment of celestial glory \*.”——How  
 { few princes enjoy the happiness of such a correspondence, or have the wisdom and virtue to encourage it!

Alcuinus composed many treatises on a great variety of subjects, in a style much superior in purity and elegance to that of the generality of writers in the age in which he flourished †. Charlemagne often solicited him, with all the warmth of a most affectionate friend, to return to court, and favour him with his company and advice; but he still excused himself; and nothing could draw him from his retirement in his abbey of St Martin in Tours, where he died A. D. 804.

Other learned men who flourished in England in this century.

Though Beda and Alcuinus were unquestionably the brightest luminaries, not only of England, but of the Christian world, in the eighth century; yet there were some other natives of Britain who made no inconsiderable figure in the republic of letters in this period; and are therefore entitled to have their names at least preserved in the history of their country. Boniface, the first Archbishop of Mentz, was a native of Britain; but whether of South or North Britain, is not agreed ‡. He received his education in several English monasteries, and became famous for his genius and learning. Being ordained a priest in the first year of this century, he was soon after

\* Lectiones Antiq. Canis. t. 2.

† Biograph. Britan. in Alcuin.

‡ Cave Hist. Literar. p. 480. Mackenzie's Scotch Writers, p. 35.




inspired with the zeal of propagating the gospel <sup>Cent. VIII.</sup> among those nations of Europe who were still Heathens. With this view, he left his native country, A. D. 704, and travelled into Germany, where he spent about fifty years in preaching the gospel with equal zeal and success, making many converts, and founding many churches. To encourage him in his labours, he was consecrated a bishop by Pope Gregory II. A. D. 723, and appointed Archbishop of Mentz, A. D. 732, by Gregory III. Boniface being considered as the apostle of Germany, had great authority in all the churches of that country, and presided in several councils; but was at last barbarously murdered by some Pagans near Utrecht, June 5. A. D. 754, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. This active prelate, in the course of his long life, besides some other works, wrote a great number of letters, which have been collected and published by Serarius, and contain many curious things\*. Willibald, the nephew and fellow-labourer of Boniface, was a man of learning, and wrote the life of his uncle†. Eddius, a monk of Canterbury, who flourished in this century, was very famous for his skill in church-music, a science much esteemed and cultivated in those times, and wrote the life of Wilfred Archbishop of York, which hath been published by Dr Gale‡. Dungal and Clement, two

\* Du Pin Eccles. Hist. cent. 8.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Scriptores xv. Histor. Britan. t. 1. p. 40.

Cent. VIII.  Scotchmen, were very famous for their learning in the latter part of this century, and taught the sciences in Italy and France with much reputation, under the patronage of Charlemagne\*. But it would be improper to be more particular in our enumeration of the learned men of this century.

Sciences  
studied in  
this century.

The sciences commonly taught and studied in this age were few and imperfect. It seems to have been in this period that the famous division of the seven liberal arts or sciences into the *trivium* and *quadrivium* took place. The *trivium* comprehended grammar, rhetoric, and logic; the *quadrivium*, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, according to the barbarous verses quoted below †. John of Salisbury, who flourished in the twelfth century, speaks of this division of the sciences as of very great antiquity in his time. “The sciences are divided,” says he, “into the *trivii* and *quadrivii*; which were “so much admired by our ancestors in former “ages, that they imagined they comprehended “all wisdom and learning, and were sufficient “for the solution of all questions, and the removing of all difficulties: for whoever understood the *trivii* (grammar, rhetoric, and “logic) could explain all manner of books

\* Murator. Antiq. t. 3. c. 815. &c.

† *Gramm.* loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet. *Rhet.* verba colorat,

*Mus.* cadit, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *Ast.* colit astra.

*Bruckeri Hist. Philos. t. 3. p. 597.*

“ without a teacher; but he who was further Cent. VIII.  
 “ advanced, and comprehended also the *quadri-*  
 “ *vii* (music, arithmetic, geometry, and astro-  
 “ nomy), could answer all questions, and un-  
 “ fold all the secrets of nature\*.” How an-  
 cient is the art of concealing ignorance under  
 specious pretences to knowledge! Natural and  
 experimental philosophy was totally neglected;  
 nor were the foundations and principles of mo-  
 rals any part of the study of the learned in this  
 period†. The learned reader will find a very  
 curious poetical catalogue of the sciences taught  
 in the academy of York, in the work quoted  
 below‡.

The narrow limits and very imperfect state of Causes of  
the low  
state of  
learning in  
this cen-  
tury.  
 the sciences in this age were owing to various  
 causes; but especially to the total neglect, or  
 rather contempt, of learning, by the laity of all  
 ranks; the greatest princes being, for the most  
 part, quite illiterate. After what hath been said  
 of the learning of Charlemagne, who was un-  
 questionably the greatest monarch and wisest man  
 of his age, it will no doubt surprise the reader to  
 hear, that his education had been so much ne-  
 glected, that he could not write, and that he was  
 forty-five years of age when he began to study  
 the sciences under Alcuinus||. From this ex-

\* Joan. Salis. Metalog. l. 1. c. 12.

† Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 599.

‡ Alcuinus de Pontificibus et Sanctis Eccles. Ebor. apud Gale, p. 72.

|| Eginhard. Vita Caroli Magni, c. 25.

Cent. VIII. ample, we may form some judgment of the education and learning, or rather ignorance, of the other princes and nobles of Europe in those times. Learning then being wholly in the hands of the clergy, and a very small portion of it being sufficient to enable them to perform the offices of the church with tolerable decency, few, very few of them, aspired to any more. Nor have we any reason to be surprised at this, when we consider the difficulty of procuring books and masters, and gaining even a smattering of the sciences; and that when it was gained, it contributed little to their credit, and nothing to their preferment, as there were so few who were capable of discerning literary merit, or disposed to reward it.

Cent. IX.  
State of  
learning in  
the ninth  
century.

Learning, which had begun to decline in England about the middle of the eighth century, was almost quite extinguished in the beginning of the ninth; and that profound darkness which had been a little dissipated by the appearance of a few extraordinary men, as Aldhelm, Beda, Egbert, and Alcuinus, returned again, and resumed its dominion over the minds of men. Many of the monasteries, which were the only seats of learning, had by this time been destroyed, either by the Danes or by the civil wars, their libraries burnt, and the monks dispersed. This was particularly the case in the kingdom of Northumberland, where learning had flourished most, as we are informed by the following passages in the letters of Alcuinus,

preserved by William of Malmsbury. To the Cent. IX.  
clergy of York he writes:—"I call God to  
" witness, that it was not the love of gold that  
" carried me into France, or that detains me  
" there; but the wretched and deplorable state  
" of your church." To Offa King of Mer-  
cia:—"I was ready to return into my native  
" country of Northumberland loaded with pre-  
" sents by Charlemagne; but upon the intelli-  
" gence I have received, I think it better to  
" remain where I am, than venture myself in a  
" country where no man can enjoy security, or  
" prosecute his studies. For, lo! their churches  
" are demolished by the Pagans, their altars  
" polluted with impiety, their monasteries de-  
" filed with adulteries, and the land wet with  
" the blood of its nobles and princes\*." From  
hence it appears (says Malmsbury) how many  
calamities were brought upon England through  
the neglect of learning, and the other vices of  
its inhabitants. As the devastations of the Danes  
were gradually carried into all parts of England  
in the course of this century, the monasteries,  
and other seats of learning, were every where  
laid in the dust, and the very last glimmerings  
of literary knowledge almost quite extinguished.  
Of this we have the fullest evidence in the fol-  
lowing passage of a letter of Alfred the Great to  
Wulfsig Bishop of Worcester: "At my acces-  
" sion to the throne, (A. D. 871.), all know-

\* W. Malms. l. x. c. 3.

Cent. IX. “ ledge and learning was extinguished in the  
 “ English nation: insomuch that there were very  
 “ few to the south of the Humber who under-  
 “ stood the common prayers of the church, or  
 “ were capable of translating a single sentence  
 “ of Latin into English; but to the south of  
 “ the Thames, I cannot recollect so much as  
 “ one who could do this\*.” Another cotem-  
 porary writer gives the following melancholy  
 account of the state of learning in this period:  
 “ In our days, those who discover any taste for  
 “ learning, or desire of knowledge, are become  
 “ the objects of contempt and hatred; their  
 “ conduct is viewed with jealous eyes; and if  
 “ any blemish is detected in their behaviour, it  
 “ is imputed, not to the frailty of human nature,  
 “ but to the nature of their studies, and their  
 “ affectation of being wiser than their neighbours.  
 “ By this means, those few who have really a  
 “ love to learning, are deterred from engaging  
 “ in the noble pursuit, through the dread of that  
 “ reproach and ignominy to which it would ex-  
 “ pose them †.”

Life of  
John Scot.

When learning was in this condition, we cannot expect to meet with many learned men who merit a place in the annals of their country. Accordingly we do not find above one or two among the people of this island from the death of Alcuinus, A. D. 804, to the accession of Al-

\* Spelman Vita Alfredi, Append. 3. p. 196.


† Serrati Lupi Epist. ad Eginhardum, Ep. 1.

fred, A. D. 871, who attained to any degree of literary fame. The most learned man in Europe, however, in this dark period, was a native of Britain, and most probably of the town of Ayr in Scotland. This was Johannes Scotus Erigena, so called from his country, and the place of his birth; and surnamed the *Wise*, on account of his superior knowledge and erudition \*. This ingenious man, who was probably born about the beginning of this century, seeing his own country involved in great darkness and confusion, and affording no means of acquiring that knowledge after which he thirsted, travelled into foreign parts, and, if we may believe some writers, into Greece, where he acquired the knowledge of the Greek language and of the Greek philosophy, which were very rare accomplishments in those times †. “In whatever manner,” says one of the best writers of literary history, “he acquired the knowledge of languages and philosophy, it is very certain that he had not only a very pleasant and facetious, but also a very acute and penetrating genius; that in philosophy he had no superior, and in languages no equal, in the age in which he flourished ‡.” These uncommon accomplishments, together with his wit and pleasantry, which rendered his conversation as agreeable as

\* Mackenzie's Lives of Scotch Writers, p. 49.

† Baleus de Script. Britan. p. 114.

‡ Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 615.

Cent. IX.  it was instructive, procured him an invitation from Charles the Bald, King of France, the greatest patron of learning and learned men in that age. Scotus accepted of this invitation, and lived several years in the court of that great prince, on a footing of the most intimate friendship and familiarity, sleeping often in the royal apartment, and dining daily at the royal table. We may judge of the freedom which he used with Charles, by the following repartee, preserved by one of our ancient historians. As the King and Scotus were sitting one day at table opposite to each other, after dinner, drinking a cheerful glass, the philosopher having said something that was not quite agreeable to the rules of French politeness, the King, in a merry humour, asked him, Pray what is between a Scot and a sot? To which he answered, Nothing but the table \*. The King, says the historian, laughed heartily, and was not in the least offended, as he made it a rule never to be angry with his master, as he always called Scotus. But Charles valued this great man for his wisdom and learning still more than for his wit, and retained him about his person, not only as an agreeable companion, but as his preceptor in the sciences, and his best counsellor in the most arduous affairs of government. At the desire of his royal friend and patron; Scotus composed several works while he resided in the court of France; which

\* Hoveden Annal. 2d an. 866.



procured him many admirers on the one hand, and many adversaries on the other; especially among the clergy, to whom his notions on several subjects did not appear perfectly orthodox. His books on predestination and the eucharist in particular, were supposed to contain many bold and dangerous positions; and a crowd of angry monks and others wrote against him\*. While he was engaged in these disputes, an incident happened which drew upon him the displeasure of the sovereign pontiff. Michael Balbus, the Greek Emperor, had sent a copy of the works of Dionysius the philosopher to the Emperor Lewis the Pious, A. D. 824, as a most valuable present. This was esteemed an inestimable treasure in France, because it was ignorantly believed to be the work of Dionysius the Areopagite, the pretended apostle of the French; but being in Greek, it was quite unintelligible. Charles the Bald, the son and successor of Lewis, desirous of perusing this work, employed his friend Scotus to translate it into Latin; which he undertook, and accomplished, without consulting the Pope. This, with the former suspicions of his heterodoxy, gave so great offence to His Holiness, that he wrote a very angry letter to the King of France, requesting, or rather commanding, him to send Scotus to Rome, to undergo a trial. "I have been informed," says the Pope in his letter, "that one John, a Scotchman by

\* Brucker, Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 616.

Cent. IX. “ birth, hath lately translated into Latin the  
“ work of Dionysius the Areopagite, concerning  
“ the divine names and the celestial hierarchy,  
“ which he should have sent to me for my ap-  
“ probation, according to custom. This was  
“ the more necessary, because the said John,  
“ though a man of great learning, is reported  
“ not to think rightly in some things\*.” But  
Charles had too great an affection for his learned  
and agreeable companion to trust him in the  
hands of the incensed pontiff. The most ca-  
pital work of this John Scot was his book con-  
cerning the nature of things, or the division of  
natures; which, after lying long in MS. was at  
length published by Dr Thomas Gale. This  
was in several respects the most curious literary  
production of that age, being written with a me-  
taphysical subtlety and acuteness then unknown  
in Europe. This acuteness Scotus had acquired  
by reading the writings of the Greek philoso-  
phers; and by his using the subtleties and refine-  
ments of logic in the discussion of theological sub-  
jects, he became the father of that scholastic di-  
vinity, which made so distinguished a figure in  
the middle ages, and maintained its ground so  
long. The criticism of one of our ancient histo-  
rians on this work is not unjust. “ His book,  
“ intitled, *The divisions of natures*, is of great  
“ use in solving many intricate and perplexing  
“ questions; if we can forgive him for deviating

\* Aub. Miræus ad Gemblacen, c. 93. p. 104.

“ from the path of the Latin philosophers and  
 “ divines, and pursuing that of the Greeks. It Cent. IX.  
 “ was this that made him appear heretic to many;  
 “ and it must be confessed, that there are many  
 “ things in it, which, at first sight at least, seem  
 “ to be contrary to the Catholic faith\*.” Of  
 this kind are his opinions about God and the  
 universe; which have evidently too great a re-  
 semblance to the pantheism of Spinoza. Scotus  
 was not free from that learned vanity which makes  
 men delight in such paradoxes as are commonly  
 no better than impious or ridiculous absurdities.  
 The following short quotations from this work  
 will abundantly justify these strictures. “ All  
 “ things are God, and God is all things. When  
 “ we say that God created all things, we mean  
 “ only, that God is in all things, and that he is  
 “ the essence of all things, by which they exist.  
 “ The universe is both eternal and created, and  
 “ neither did its eternity precede its creation,  
 “ nor its creation precede its eternity†.” The  
 philosophical and theological system of Scotus  
 appears to have been this in a few words:  
 “ That the universe, and all things which it  
 “ comprehends, were not only virtually, but es-  
 “ sentially in God; that they flowed from him  
 “ from eternity; and shall, at the consumma-  
 “ tion of all things, be resolved again into him,  
 “ as into their great fountain and origin. After

\* Hovedeni Annal. ad ann. 883.

† Jo. Scoti Erigenæ de Divisione Naturæ, libri quinque, p. 42. 111.  
 123.

Cent. IX. “ the resurrection,” says he, “ nature, and all its  
 “ causes, shall be resolved unto God, and then  
 “ nothing shall exist but God alone\*.” These  
 opinions were far enough from being agreeable  
 to the Catholic faith: and therefore we need not  
 be surprised to hear, that the Pope Honorius III.  
 published a bull, commanding all the copies of  
 this book that could be found to be sent to  
 Rome, in order to be burnt; “ because,” says His  
 Holiness, “ it is quite full of the worms of he-  
 “ retical pravity†.” The concluding scene of  
 the history of this learned and ingenious man is  
 involved in darkness and uncertainty. Some  
 English historians affirm, that after the death of  
 his great patron Charles the Bald, he came over  
 into England, at the invitation of Alfred the  
 Great; that he taught some time in the university  
 of Oxford; from whence he retired to the abbey  
 of Malmsbury, where he was murdered by his  
 scholars with their penknives‡. But these  
 writers seem to have confounded John Scot Eri-  
 gena with another John Scot, who was an Eng-  
 lishman, cotemporary with Alfred, taught at  
 Oxford, and was slain by the monks of the  
 abbey of Ethelinge, of which he was abbot§.  
 It is most probable that Erigena ended his days  
 in France¶.

\* Jo. Scoti Erigenæ de Divisione Naturæ, libri quinque, p. 232.

† Alberic. Chron. ad ann. 1225.

‡ W. Malms. l. 2. c. 4. Hoveden Annal. ad ann. 866.

§ Asserius in Vita Alfredi.

¶ Histoire Littéraire de la France, Siecle 9.

The reign of Alfred the Great, from A. D. 817, to A. D. 901, is a most memorable period in the annals of learning, and affords more materials for literary history than two or three centuries either before or after, shining with all the warmth and lustre of the brightest day of summer, amidst the gloom of a long, dark, and stormy winter. Every friend to learning, and the improvement of the human mind, must wish to see the literary merits of this excellent prince set in a fair and just light, for the honour of human nature, and an example to all succeeding princes.

Cent. IX.

History of  
learning  
in the  
reign of  
Alfred the  
Great.

Alfred the Great appeared at a time, and in circumstances, the most unfavourable that can be conceived for the acquisition of knowledge, being born when his country was involved in the most profound darkness and deplorable confusion, when the small remains of science that were left were wholly confined to cloisters, and learning was considered rather as a reproach than an honour to a prince. Accordingly we find that his education was totally neglected in this respect : and though he was carefully instructed in the art of hunting, in which he attained to great dexterity, he was not taught to know one letter from another till he was above twelve years of age ; when a book was put into his hand by a kind of accident, rather than any formed design. The Queen, his mother, one day being in company with her four sons, of whom Alfred was the youngest, and having a book of Saxon


Literary  
history of  
Alfred.

Cent. IX. poems in her hand, beautifully written and illuminated, observed, that the royal youths were charmed with the beauty of the book; upon which she said,—“ I will make a present of this “ book to him who shall learn to read it soonest.” Alfred immediately took fire, and applied to learn to read with such ardour, that in a very little time he both read and repeated the poem to the Queen, and received it for his reward\*. From that moment he was seized with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and reading and study became his chief delight. But still he met with great difficulties in the prosecution of his studies for want of proper helps. “ I have “ heard him,” says Asserius, “ lament it with many “ sighs, as the greatest misfortune of his life, “ that when he was young, and had leisure for “ study, he could not find masters to instruct “ him; because at that time there were few or “ none among the West-Saxons who had any “ learning, or could so much as read with propriety and ease†.” For some years before, and several years after his accession to the throne, he was so incessantly engaged in wars against the Danes, and in other affairs of state, that he had but little time for study; but of that little he did not lose a moment, carrying a book continually in his bosom, to which he applied whenever he had an opportunity‡. When he was

\* Asser. de Alfrædi Rebus gestis, p. 5. edit. a Camden.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Id. ibid.

advanced in life, and had restored the tranquillity Cent. IX.  
of his country by the submission of the Danes,   
he was so far from relaxing, that he redoubled  
his efforts to improve his mind in knowledge,  
devoting a considerable portion of his time to  
study, and employing all his leisure hours in  
reading or hearing others read\*. By this in-  
cessant application to study, this excellent prince  
became one of the greatest scholars of the age in  
which he flourished. He is said to have spoken  
the Latin language with as much ease and fluency  
as his native tongue, and understood, but did  
not speak Greek. He was an eloquent orator,  
an acute philosopher, an excellent historian,  
mathematician, musician, and architect, and the  
prince of the Saxon poets†.

Alfred did not prosecute his studies with all Invited  
learned  
men to his  
court.  
this ardour merely as a private man, and for his  
own improvement only, but as a great prince,  
and for the improvement of his subjects, whose  
ignorance he viewed with much compassion.  
Conscious that the revival of learning in a coun-  
try where it was quite extinct, was too arduous  
a task even for the greatest monarch, without as-  
sistance, he was at great pains to find out learned  
men in other countries, whom he invited to settle  
in his court and kingdom. Those who accepted  
his invitations, he received in the kindest man-  
ner, treated with the most engaging familiarity,

\* Asser. de Alfredi Rebus gestis, p. 5. edit. a Camden.

† W. Westm. A. D. 871. Ingulf. p. 28. W. Mahms. l. 2. c. 4.

Cent. IX. and loaded with the greatest favours. Some of these learned men he kept about his own person, as the companions of his studies, and to assist him in the instruction of his own sons, and of the sons of his nobility, who were educated with them in his palace: while he stationed others of them in those places where they might be most useful \*. As these scholars, though in a humbler station, were the associates of the illustrious Alfred in the revival of learning, they merit our grateful remembrance in this place.

Life of  
Asser.

Asser, a monk of St. David's in Wales, was one of Alfred's greatest favourites, and wrote his life, to which we are chiefly indebted for our knowledge of the actions and character of this great prince. Alfred having heard this monk much celebrated for his learning, invited him to his court; and was so charmed with his conversation at the first interview, that he earnestly pressed him to come and live constantly with him. To this the monk, not being his own master, could not agree; but at length, with the consent of his monastery, it was settled, that he should spend one half of every year at St. David's, and the other at the court of England; where he employed much of his time in reading with the King, who rewarded him with three rich abbeys, and many noble presents †.

Grimbald,  
&c.

Grimbald, a monk of Rheims in France, was another of the learned men whom Alfred invited

\* Asser. de Alfredi Rebus gestis, p. 5. edit. a Camden.

† Id. p. 15.



to his court, to assist him in his own studies, and Cent. IX. in reviving the study of letters among his subjects. This monk was particularly famous for his theological and ecclesiastical learning, and his skill in church music, which rendered him a valuable acquisition to Alfred, and a useful instrument in promoting his designs for the restoration of learning, as we shall see by and by \*. He procured another learned man from Old Saxony on the continent, who was named *John Scot*, and is by many writers confounded with John Scot Erigena, though he was evidently a different person †. Plegmund Archbishop of Canterbury, Werefred Bishop of Worcester, Dunwulph Bishop of Winchester, Wulfsig and Ethelstan Bishops of London, and Werebert Bishop of Chester, were among the learned men who assisted Alfred in his studies, and in promoting the interests of learning among his subjects ‡.

By the assistance of these ingenious men, and Works of Alfred. his own indefatigable application, Alfred acquired a very uncommon degree of erudition; which he employed, like a great and a good prince, in composing some original works, and translating others out of Latin into Saxon, for the instruction of his people. The most perfect catalogue, both of the original works, and translations of this excellent prince, may be found in

\* Asser. de Alfredi Rebus gestis, p. 14. edit. a Camden.

† Ingulf. Hist.

‡ Spelman. Life of Alfred, p. 137. 138.

Cent. IX. the work quoted below \* ; but is too long to be  
here inserted. The motives which prompted Alfred to translate some books out of Latin into Saxon, and the methods which he used in making and publishing these translations, are communicated to us by himself, in his preface to one of them: “ When I considered with myself how  
“ much the knowledge of the Latin tongue was  
“ decayed in England, though many could read  
“ their native language well enough, I began,  
“ amidst all the hurry and multiplicity of my  
“ affairs, to translate this book (the pastoral of  
“ St Gregory) out of Latin into English, in  
“ some places very literally, in others more  
“ freely ; as I had been taught by Plegmund  
“ my Archbishop, and Asser my Bishop, and  
“ Grimbold and John my priests. When I  
“ had learned by their instructions, to comprehend the sense of the original clearly, I translated it, I say, and sent a copy of my translation to every bishop’s seat in my kingdom,  
“ with an æstel or handle worth fifty mancusses,  
“ charging all men, in the name of God, neither  
“ to separate the book from the handle, nor remove it out of the church ; because I did not  
“ know how long we might enjoy the happiness  
“ of having such learned prelates as we have at  
“ present †.” There can be no doubt that Alfred had the same views, and proceeded in the

\* Biographia Britan. vol. 1. p. 54. 55.

† Spelman. Vita Alfredi, Append. No. 3. p. 197.

same manner, in making and publishing his other translations. Cent. IX.

At the accession of Alfred the Great, all the seminaries of learning in England were laid in ashes. These were the monasteries and bishops' seats where schools had been kept for the education of youth, chiefly for the church, which were so universally destroyed by the Danes, that hardly one of them was left standing. This great prince, sensible how impossible it was to revive learning, without providing schools for the education of youth, repaired the old monasteries, and built new ones, instituting a school in each of them for that purpose \*. But in these monastic and episcopal schools, both in England and in other countries of Europe, the youth were only taught reading, writing, the Latin language, and church-music, to fit them for performing the public offices of the church; except in a very few, where some were taught arithmetic, to enable them to manage the secular affairs of their societies; and others instructed in rhetoric and theology, to assist them in declaiming to the people †. Though these schools prevented the total extinction of literary knowledge among the Christian clergy in those dark times, they contributed very little to the improvement of the sciences, or the diffusing of learning among the laity, who were left almost entirely without the means of acquiring any degree of literature.

\* Spelman. Vita Alfredi, Append. No. 3. p. 106.

† Courting. de. Antiquit. Academ. p. 67, 68.

Cent. IX.

The univer-  
sity of Ox-  
ford found-  
ed.

When Alfred the Great, therefore, formed the noble design of rendering learning both more perfect and more general, he was under a necessity of instituting schools on a different and more extensive plan, in which all the sciences that were then known should be taught, by the best masters that could be procured, to the laity as well as to the clergy. This great prince, having formed the idea of such a school, was very happy in the choice of a place for its establishment, fixing on that auspicious spot where the university of Oxford, one of the most illustrious seats of learning in the world, now stands. Whether he was determined to make this choice by its having been a seat of learning in former times, by the natural amenity of the place, or by its convenient situation, almost in the centre of his dominions, we have not leisure to inquire, as it would lead us into several tedious and doubtful disquisitions. Being surrounded by a considerable number of learned men, collected from different countries, he justly thought, that they could not be better employed than in instructing the rising generation in divine and human learning. In order to enable them to do this with the greater success, he provided suitable accommodations for them and their scholars, at Oxford; though, at this distance of time, it cannot be discovered with certainty what these accommodations and endowments were. The following account of the schools founded at Oxford by Alfred the Great, is given by John Rouse, the

antiquarian of Warwick, who flourished in the Cent. IX.  
fifteenth century; to which our readers may give  
that degree of credit which they think it merits.

“ At the first founding of the university of Ox-  
“ ford, the noble King Alfred built three halls  
“ in the name of the Holy Trinity, for the doc-  
“ tors in grammar, philosophy, and divinity.  
“ The first of these halls was situated in High-  
“ street, near the east gate of the city, and en-  
“ dowed with a sufficient maintenance for twenty-  
“ six grammarians. This was called *Little-hall*,  
“ on account of the inferiority of the science  
“ there studied; and it still retains that name  
“ even in my time. The second was built near  
“ the north wall of the city, in the street now  
“ called *School-street*, and endowed for twenty-  
“ six logicians or philosophers, and had the name  
“ of *Less-hall*. The third was built also in  
“ High-street, contiguous to *Little-hall*, and  
“ was endowed for twenty-six divines, for the  
“ study of the holy scriptures \*.” This account,  
some may think, is corroborated by the follow-  
ing passage of the old annals of the monastery  
of Winchester, which hath also preserved the  
names of the first professors in this celebrated  
seat of learning, after its foundation or restora-  
tion by King Alfred. “ In the year of our Lord  
“ 886, in the second year of St Grimbald’s  
“ coming over into England, the university of  
“ Oxford was founded. The first regents there,  
“ and readers in divinity, were St Neot, an

\* J. Ross. Hist. Regum Angl. p. 77. 78.

Cent. IX. “ abbot and eminent professor of theology, and  
 “ St Grimbald, an eloquent and most excellent  
 “ interpreter of the holy scriptures. Grammar  
 “ and rhetoric were taught by Asserius, a monk,  
 “ a man of extraordinary learning. Logic, mu-  
 “ sic, and arithmetic, were read by John, a  
 “ monk of St David’s. Geometry and astro-  
 “ nomy were professed by John, a monk and  
 “ colleague of St Grimbald, a man of sharp  
 “ wit and immense knowledge. These lec-  
 “ tures were often honoured with the presence  
 “ of the most illustrious and invincible monarch  
 “ King Alfred, whose memory to every judi-  
 “ cious taste shall be always sweeter than ho-  
 “ ney \*.” For the support of the masters and  
 scholars, in these and the other schools which he  
 established, Alfred allotted one-eighth part of  
 his whole revenue †. It seems to have been in  
 these newly erected schools at Oxford, that their  
 illustrious founders settled his youngest son Æthel-  
 weard, with the sons of his nobility and others,  
 for their education, of which Asserius, a cotem-  
 porary writer, and one of the professors above  
 mentioned, gives the following account: “ He  
 “ placed Æthelweard, his youngest son, who  
 “ was fond of learning, together with the sons  
 “ of his nobility, and of many persons of in-  
 “ ferior rank, in schools which he had esta-  
 “ blished with great wisdom and foresight, and

\* Camd. Britan. t. 1. c. 304.

† Asser. Vita Alfredi, edit. a Camd. p. 20.

“ provided with able masters. In these schools Cent. IX.  
 “ the youth were instructed in reading and writ-  
 “ ing both the Saxon and Latin languages, and  
 “ in other liberal arts, before they arrived at suf-  
 “ ficient strength of body for hunting, and other  
 “ manly exercises becoming their rank \*.” It  
 is at least certain, from what follows immediately  
 after in Asserius, that the schools in which Æthel-  
 weard and his fellow-students were placed, were  
 different from those in which his two elder bro-  
 thers, Edward and Elfhryth, were educated,  
 which were in the king’s court †. There is an-  
 other passage in Asserius, as published by Camden,  
 relating to the university of Oxford, which hath  
 been the occasion of much controversy, some  
 writers contending for its authenticity, and others  
 affirming that it hath been interpolated. After  
 examining the arguments on both sides of this  
 question, which are too tedious to be here in-  
 serted, I cannot help suspecting the genuineness  
 of this passage; but as I dare not positively pro-  
 nounce it spurious, I shall lay it before the reader.  
 “ The same year (886.) there arose a great dis-  
 “ sension at Oxford, between Grimbald and the  
 “ learned men which he brought with him, and  
 “ the old scholars which he found there, who  
 “ refused to comply with the laws and forms of  
 “ reading prescribed by Grimbald. For about  
 “ three years this difference occasioned only a  
 “ private grudge, which made no great noise ;

\* Asser. Vita Alfredi, edit. a Camd. p. 13.

† Id. ibid.

Cent. IX. “ but at length it broke out with great violence.  
“ The invincible King Alfred, being informed  
“ of this by a message and complaint from  
“ Grimbold, hastened to Oxford to put an end  
“ to these disputes, and heard both parties with  
“ great patience. The old scholars pleaded in  
“ their own defence, that before Grimbold came  
“ to Oxford, learning flourished there, though  
“ the students were not so numerous as they had  
“ formerly been, many of them having been ex-  
“ pelled by the cruelties of the Pagans. They  
“ further affirmed, and proved by the undoubted  
“ testimony of ancient annals, that the laws and  
“ statutes of that place had been established by  
“ men of great piety and learning, as Gildas,  
“ Melkin, Nennius, Kentigern, and others, who  
“ had taught there in their old age, and had  
“ managed all things with great tranquillity and  
“ good order; and that when St Germanus  
“ came into Britain to preach against the Pela-  
“ gian heresy, he resided six months at Oxford,  
“ and greatly approved of its laws and institu-  
“ tions. The king having heard both parties  
“ with incredible patience and humility, and  
“ having earnestly exhorted them to lay aside  
“ their disputes, and live in peace and concord,  
“ left them in hopes that they would comply  
“ with his admonitions. But Grimbold, not  
“ satisfied with this, retired to the new monas-  
“ tery at Winchester, which King Alfred had  
“ lately founded, and soon after had his tomb  
“ brought thither also, which he had originally



“ set up in a vault under the chancel in the Cent. IX.  
 “ church of St Peter at Oxford ; which church  
 “ he had built from the foundation with stones  
 “ polished with great art \*.” In a word, if Oxford had been a seat of learning in more ancient times, which it is certainly very difficult either to prove or disprove, it appears to have been so entirely ruined, together with all the other seminaries of learning in England, in the beginning of King Alfred’s reign, that this great prince may be justly styled the father and founder of the university of Oxford : a circumstance equally honourable to his memory, and to this famous seat of learning !

When Alfred the Great had thus founded and Revival of learning.  
 endowed schools, and provided them with proper masters, he next endeavoured to fill them with suitable scholars ; which was not the easiest part of his work in that rude age, when learning was held in such contempt, especially by the nobility. This illiberal and barbarous contempt of letters, he effectually destroyed in a little time, —by his own example,—by speaking on all occasions in praise of learning,—and by making it the great road to preferment, both in church and state †. Still further to diffuse a taste for knowledge, and to transmit it to posterity, he made a law, obliging all freeholders who possessed two hides of land, or upwards, to send their

\* Asser. Vita Alfredi, edit. a Camd. p. 16.

† W. Malms. l. 2. c. 4.

Cent. IX. sons to school, and give them a liberal education\*.

By these wise measures, this most excellent prince made a total change in the sentiments of his subjects. The old nobility bewailed their unhappiness in being ignorant of letters, and some of them applied to study in a very advanced age; while all took care to send their sons, and young relations, to those schools provided for them by the wisdom and munificence of their sovereign†. In a word, learning revived and flourished to such a degree in the course of Alfred's reign, that before the end of it he could boast, that all his bishops' sees were filled by prelates of great learning, and every pulpit in England furnished with a good preacher. So astonishing are the effects which a great and good prince, animated with an ardent zeal for the happiness of his subjects, can produce not only in the circumstances, but in the very spirit and character of a nation!

Cent. X.  
State of  
learning  
the tenth  
century.

That gleam of light which appeared in England towards the conclusion of the ninth century, was not of long continuance; for as this was chiefly owing to the extraordinary genius and prodigious efforts of Alfred the Great, as soon as these were removed by the death of that prince, in the first year of the tenth century, learning began to languish and decline. Edward, his eldest son, and successor, had been educated with great care; but not having the

\* Abbas Reivallensis.

† Asser. Vita Alfredi, p. 21.

same genius and taste for study with his illustrious father, he did not prove so great a patron of learning and learned men\*. The Danes, too, those destructive enemies of science and civility, no sooner heard of the death of Alfred, than they renewed their ravages; which they continued, with little interruption, for many years. Besides this, the learned men collected by Alfred from different countries, dying soon after their royal patron, were not succeeded by men of equal learning. These, and several other unfavourable circumstances, gave a fatal check to the liberal and studious spirit which had been excited in the late reign; and the English by degrees relapsed into their former ignorance and contempt of learning. In this indeed they were far from being singular at this period; for all the nations of Europe were involved in such profound darkness during the whole course of the tenth century, that the writers of literary history are at a loss for words to paint the ignorance, stupidity, and barbarism of that age†. “We now enter,” says one, “on the history of an age, which, for its barbarism and wickedness, may be called the age of iron; for its dulness and stupidity, the age of lead; and for its blindness and ignorance, the age of darkness‡.” “The tenth century,” says another, “is commonly and justly called

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 5. Hoveden, *pars prior*.

† Cave, *Histor. Literar.* p. 571. Brucker, *Hist. Philosoph.* t. 3. p. 632.

‡ Baron, *Annal. ad an. 900.*

Cent. X.

“ the unhappy age ; for it was almost quite  
“ destitute of men of genius and learning, had  
“ few great princes or good prelates, and hard-  
“ ly any thing was performed in it that merits  
“ the attention of posterity \*.” The many  
gross errors, and wretched superstitions, that  
were either introduced or established in the  
course of this century, such as transubstantia-  
tion,—the adoration of images and relics,—the  
baptism of bells,—the belief of the most childish  
stories of visions, apparitions, and miracles,—  
the celibacy of the clergy,—trials by fire and  
water ordeals, &c. &c. were sufficient proofs of  
its ignorance and stupidity. The popes who  
governed the church of Rome in this century,  
were for the most part the vilest miscreants that  
ever disgraced human nature ; and that city,  
where letters had hitherto been cultivated in  
some degree, now became a scene of such de-  
plorable ignorance, as well as wickedness, that  
a cotemporary writer cries out, “ O miserable  
“ Rome ! thou that formerly didst hold out so  
“ many great and glorious luminaries to our  
“ ancestors, into what prodigious darkness art  
“ thou now fallen, which will render thee in-  
“ famous to all succeeding ages † !” The cler-  
gy, in this age, were almost as illiterate as the  
laity. Some who filled the highest stations in  
the church, could not so much as read ; while

\* Genebrard. p. 552.

† Arnoldus Orleanensis, apud Du Pin, Hist. Eccles. cent. 10.

others, who pretended to be better scholars, and attempted to perform the public offices, committed the most egregious blunders; of which the reader will find one example, out of many, quoted below \*.

Cent. X.

When this was the melancholy state of letters England. in all the nations of Europe, it cannot be supposed that England will furnish us with many valuable materials for literary history in this age. It must, however, be observed, that the decline of learning in this island, after the death of Alfred, was gradual, and that it acquired a considerable time to destroy all the effects of his labours for its advancement. Besides, though his son Edward, and his grandson Athelstan, were very far inferior to him in learning, and in their efforts for its support; yet they had not so entirely forgotten his precepts and example, as to be quite indifferent to its interests. On the contrary, they were not only the bravest, but the most intelligent princes of their age, and the greatest patrons of learning.

Edward, if we may believe some of our ancient University of Cambridge. historians, was the founder or restorer of the university of Cambridge, as his father had been of Oxford. “Edward, surnamed the *Elder*, “succeeded his father Alfred the Great; and


\* Meinwerc, Bishop of Paderborn, in this century, in reading the public prayers, used to say,—“Benedic Domine regibus et reginis mulis et mulabris tuis :—instead of famulis et famulabis : which made it a very ludicrous petition.

Cent. X.

“ though he was not equal to him in learning,  
 “ yet he loved learned men, and advanced them  
 “ to ecclesiastical dignities, according to their  
 “ merits. For the further encouragement of  
 “ learning, he raised Cambridge, as his father  
 “ had done Oxford, to its former glory, after  
 “ it had been long in ruins, with all the other  
 “ ancient seminaries of learning; and, like a  
 “ generous friend and patron of the clergy, he  
 “ commanded halls for the teachers and students  
 “ to be built there at his own expence. To  
 “ render this institution complete, he invited  
 “ teachers of the liberal arts, and doctors in  
 “ theology, from Oxford, and settled them at  
 “ Cambridge. Thus far Thomas Rodburn, in  
 “ his chronicle. But I have seen a more full  
 “ and authentic representation of this in a cer-  
 “ tain ancient painting in the abbey of Hyde,  
 “ at Winchester, which was sent to me, and  
 “ is still in my possession \*.”——If the above  
 account of the restoration of schools of learning  
 at Cambridge, by Edward the Elder, is true,  
 which I shall not take upon me either to affirm  
 or deny, these schools, together with the city of  
 Cambridge, were once more ruined by the Danes  
 A. D. 1010, and do not seem to have been re-  
 stored again till after the conclusion of the period  
 we are now delineating †. Edward gave another  
 proof of his regard to learning, by bestowing a  
 very liberal education on his five sons and nine

\* J. Rossii Hist. Reg. Ang. p. 96.

† Chron. Saxon. p. 110.

daughters, who excelled all the princes and princesses of their age in literary accomplishments. Cent. X.  Ethelward, his second son, in particular, greatly resembled his illustrious grandfather in genius and love of learning, as well as in his person; but unhappily died young\*. Athelstan, the eldest son and successor of Edward, was a prince of uncommon learning for the age in which he lived. William of Malmsbury tells us, that a few days before he wrote the history of this king, he had read an old book written in his reign, that contained so flaming a panegyric on his extraordinary learning, that he did not think fit to insert it in his work; because he suspected it was wrought up by the author beyond the truth, in order to gain the favour of Athelstan†: a suspicion which perhaps was not well founded. It appears from his laws, that this king was a friend to learning and learned men; by one of which it is decreed, “that if any man make such proficiency in learning as to obtain priest’s orders, he shall enjoy all the honours and privileges of a thane‡.” If it be true, that this prince employed certain learned Jews, who then resided in England, to translate the Old Testament out of Hebrew into English, that is a further proof of his attention both to learning and religion||. It must after all be confessed, that the efforts of Edward and Athelstan, for the

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 5.

† Id. ibid. p. 6.

‡ Spelman. Concil. t. 1. p. 406.

|| Bal. dc. Script. Brit. p. 127.

Cent. X. support of learning, were not very successful; for we meet with none who flourished under their government, so famous for their erudition as to merit a place in this work.

St Dun-  
stan cele-  
brated for  
his learn-  
ing by the  
monks.

The reigns of several succeeding kings were equally unfortunate in this respect; and England by degrees sunk into the same profound darkness and ignorance with the other nations of Europe. Some of our monkish historians, it is true, speak in the highest strains of the prodigious learning of their great champion St Dunstan. "He excelled," says one of them, "as much in learning as he did in piety; and by his prodigious diligence, and the amazing genius that God had bestowed upon him, he easily acquired, and he long retained, all kinds of knowledge; so that in a little time he became equal in learning to his teachers, and far superior to all his fellow-scholars. So acute was his reason, so lively his imagination, and so admirable his elocution, that no man ever conceived things with greater quickness, expressed them with greater elegance, nor pronounced them with greater sweetness\*."—"At this time," says another, "England was enlightened with many bright luminaries, like so many stars from heaven; among whom St Dunstan shone with superior lustre, and was, next to King Alfred, the greatest promoter of learning that ever appeared in this island†."

\* Osborn Vita Dunstan. p. 93.

† W. Malms. l. 2. c. 8.



But little credit can be given to these encomiums; for it became a kind of fashion among the English monks in the middle ages, to heap all the praises on their patron Dunstan that their imaginations could invent, without any regard to truth or probability. We are gravely told, “ That in the days of St Dunstan, all men worshipped God with fervour and sincerity; that the earth itself rejoiced, and the fields rewarded the labours of the husbandman with the most abundant harvests; that all the elements smiled, and the face of heaven was never obscured with clouds; that there were no such things as fear, discord, oppression, or murder, but that all men lived in perfect virtue and profound tranquillity; and that all those felicities flowed from the blessed St Dunstan; for which, as well as for his miracles, he was loaded with glory \*.” A picture very different from the real history of those times.

Cent. X.



After the death of Edgar the Peaceable, A. D. 975, England became a scene of great confusion and misery for many years, through the increasing power and spreading devastations of the Danes. In these circumstances, learning could not flourish; but, on the contrary, was almost entirely ruined, together with its two most famous seminaries, Oxford and Cambridge, which were reduced to ashes by those barbarians †.

Decline of  
learning.

\* W. Malm. de Gestis Pontificum Anglor. p. 115.

† Chron. Saxon. p. 139, 140.

Cent. X.  
 Life of El-  
 fric the  
 gramm-  
 rian.

Elfric the grammarian is the only man who flourished in England in the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century, that merits a place in this work on account of his erudition. This learned man, and voluminous writer, whose history is very much perplexed, was born about the middle of the tenth century, and educated under Ethelwold Bishop of Winchester, who is said to have taken great pleasure in teaching youth the rules of grammar, and the art of translating Latin books into English\*. While Elfric was still a young man, and only in the station of a private monk, he was famous for his learning, as appears from a letter of his to Wulfin Bishop of Shereburn, prefixed to a set of canons, or rather an episcopal charge, which he had drawn up at the request and for the use of that prelate, who was probably not equal to a work of that kind himself†. Being sent by Elphegus Bishop of Winchester, A. D. 987, to the monastery of Cerne in Dorsetshire, then newly founded, he there composed his grammar of the Latin tongue, which procured him the title of *the Grammarian*, and translated out of Latin into Saxon no fewer than eighty sermons or homilies for the use of the English clergy‡. These homilies are still extant in MS. in two volumes folio, and are well described by Mr Wanley, in his catalogue of

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 130.

† Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 572. Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 130.

‡ Id; ibid.

Saxon books \*. Elfric composed several other works, which procured him so great a reputation for learning, that he was on that account advanced, by degrees, to the archiepiscopal dignity. Cent. X.

While learning was thus gradually declining throughout all the kingdoms of Europe, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the light of science began to spring up in the East, among the Persians and Arabians; and the posterity of those fierce barbarians who had burnt the famous library of Alexandria, became the fondest admirers of the sciences †. By them they were preserved, when they were almost entirely lost in all other parts of the world; and it was through them that the knowledge of ancient learning was gradually restored to the several nations of Europe. Learning cultivated in the East.

The illustrious Gerbert, preceptor to Robert I. King of France, and to Otho III. Emperor of Germany, who flourished towards the conclusion of the tenth century, was the first of the Christian clergy who had resolution to apply to the followers of Mahomet, for that instruction in the sciences which he could not obtain in any part of the Christian world. This literary hero (as he may be justly called) was educated in the monastery of Fleury; but discovering the incapacity of his teachers, and prompted by an ardent thirst for knowledge, he fled from Life of Gerbert.

\* Hiccsii Thesaur. t. 2. p. 1.

† Montucla Hist. Mathemat. t. 1. p. 339.

Cent. X.

his monastery into Spain, and spent several years among the Saracens at Corduba \*. Here he made himself master of the language and learning of the Arabians, particularly of their astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic, in all of which they very much excelled. At his return into France, he was esteemed by some the most learned man, and by others the greatest magician, of his age †. All the nations in the north and west of Europe, are particularly indebted to Gerbert for the first hints they received of the Arabian numeral figures and arithmetic. Our countryman William of Malmesbury, after telling us, that it was reported that Gerbert had been taught by the Saracens in Spain to raise the devil, and to understand the language of birds, adds, “ It is, however, very certain, that he was the first who stole the knowledge of the Arabian arithmetic from the Saracens, and taught the rules of it, which still continue to engage the attention, and perplex the minds, of our arithmeticians ‡.” As Gerbert returned into France, A. D. 970, and began to communicate the knowledge which he had collected among the Saracens, it is not improbable that some of the literati in Britain might be acquainted with the Arabian cyphers and arithmetic, in the end of this century, or the beginning of the next; which is much earlier

\* W. Malm. l. 2. c. 1

‡ Id. *ibid.*† Id. *ibid.*

than is commonly believed \*. If the date over Cent. X. the very ancient gateway at Worcester was really A. D. 975, and in Arabian figures, we have direct evidence that these figures were known in England within five years after Gerbert's return from Spain †. However this may be, this adventurous scholar, though born of mean parents, was gradually advanced on account of his genius and erudition, from one ecclesiastical dignity to another, and at last placed, by his pupil Otho III. in the papal chair, where he assumed the name of *Sylvester II* ‡. So much was pre-eminence in learning esteemed, and so well was it rewarded, even in that dark age!


As little more than one half of the eleventh Cent. XI. century falls within our present period, it will furnish few materials for literary history. The State of learning in the eleventh century. power of the Danes, and the confusion and misery thereby occasioned, which had been so fatal to learning in the former century, still continued to increase in the beginning of this, and to produce the same effects. Oxford was reduced to ashes by those destructive ravagers, A. D. 1009, and Cambridge shared the same fate the year after; by which all the establishments in these places in favour of learning, and for the education of youth, whatever they were, must have been ruined ||. In this most calamitous period,

\* See Dr Wallis's Algebra, c. 3, 4.

† See Philosoph. Transact. vol. 39. p. 131.

‡ Du Pin Hist. Eccles. cent. 10.

|| Chron. Saxon. p. 139, 140.

Cent. XI.  the greatest part of the monasteries, churches, cities, and towns in England, were destroyed; and whoever will take the trouble to read the history of the first seventeen years of the eleventh century in the Saxon Chronicle, the most authentic monument of those times, will meet with such a succession of slaughter and devastation, that he will be surprised the English were not extirpated, and their country reduced to a perfect desert. We have no reason to wonder, therefore, that the muses fled from such a scene of horror and misery, and that the cultivation of learning was almost universally neglected.

State of  
learning  
under the  
Danish  
kings of  
England.

The calamities which the English had suffered in their long struggle with the Danes were so very great, that their subjection to the Danish yoke became a kind of blessing. For Canute the Great, the first King of England of the Danish line, being a wise, just, and good prince, treated his English subjects with equity and kindness, and endeavoured to repair the injuries which had been done to the country and its inhabitants in the late wars. In particular, he saw and lamented the low state to which learning was reduced, and founded schools in many places for its revival\*. It is highly probable at least, that this prince repaired the schools at Oxford, and restored to them their former privileges and revenues†. Harold, the son and successor of Canute, was a very great barbarian, and conse-

\* A. Wood, *Antiquitat. Univers. Oxon.* p. 43.

† *Id. ibid.*

quently an enemy to learning. Of this he gave Cent. XI. sufficient proof, by his plundering the university of Oxford of the revenues which had been bestowed upon it by its illustrious founder, and restored to it by Canute the Great. "The schools," says Leland, "which had been founded by Alfred the Great, and had long flourished at Oxford, were abused, spoiled, and dishonoured, by that cruel and barbarous Dane, King Harold; who plundered them of all the revenues which had been bestowed upon them by the munificence of former princes; thinking that he treated the scholars with great lenity when he left them the naked walls of their houses \*."

The restoration of the ancient line of the Anglo-Saxon kings, A. D. 1041, in the person of Edward the Confessor, was an event favourable to learning. For though Edward was not State of learning in the reign of Edward the Confessor. a great prince, he was not unlearned for the age in which he lived, nor inattentive to the interests of learning. He repaired the injuries which his predecessor Harold had done to Oxford, which, in his reign, (as we learn from Ingulphus), seems to have been the chief seminary of learning in England. "I was born," says that writer, "in England, and of English parents, in the beautiful city of London; educated in letters in my tender years at Westminster; from whence I was afterwards sent to the

\* A. Wood, *Antiquitat. Univers. Oxon.* p. 43.

Cent. XI. “ study of Oxford ; where I made greater progress in the Aristotelian philosophy than many of my cotemporaries, and became very well acquainted with the rhetoric of Cicero \*.”

This author further acquaints us, that when he was a boy at Westminster school, and used to visit his father, who lived in the court of Edward the Confessor, he was often examined, both on the Latin language and on logic, by the beautiful and virtuous queen Edgitha, who excelled in both these branches of literature †. A proof that learning was then esteemed a fashionable accomplishment even in ladies of the highest rank.

General observations on the state of learning.

Having thus deduced the history of learning through its various revolutions, from the beginning to the end of this dark period, it may be proper to conclude this chapter with a few general observations.

Difficulties of acquiring learning in this period.

That we may not entertain too contemptible an opinion of our forefathers, who flourished in the benighted ages which we are now examining, it is necessary to pay due attention to their unhappy circumstances. To say nothing of that contempt for letters which they derived from their ancestors, and of the almost incessant wars in which they were engaged, it was difficult, or rather impossible, for any but the clergy, and a very few of the most wealthy among the laity, to obtain the least smattering of learning; be-

\* Ingulphii Histor.

† Id. ibid.



cause all the means of acquiring it were far beyond their reach. It is impossible to learn to read and write even our own native tongue, which is now hardly esteemed a part of learning, without books, masters, and materials for writing; but in those ages all these were so extremely scarce and dear, that none but great princes and wealthy prelates could procure them. We have already heard of a large estate given by a king of Northumberland for a single volume; and the history of the middle ages abounds with examples of that kind\*. How then was it possible for persons of a moderate fortune to procure so much as one book, much less such a number of books as to make their learning to read an accomplishment that would reward their trouble? It was then as difficult to borrow books as to buy them. It is a sufficient proof of this, that a king of France was obliged to deposit a considerable quantity of plate, and to get one of his nobility to join with him in a bond, under a high penalty, to return it, before he could procure the loan of one volume, which may now be purchased for a few shillings†. Materials for writing were also very scarce and dear, which made few persons think of learning that art. This was one reason of the scarcity of books; and that great estates were often transferred from one owner to another by a mere verbal agree-

\* Murat. Antiq. t. 3. p. 835.

† Hist. de Louis XI. par Comines, t. 4. p. 281.

Cent. XI. ment, and the delivery of earth and stone, before witnesses, without any written deed \*. Parchment, in particular, on which all their books were written, was so difficult to be procured, that many of the MSS. of the middle ages, which are still preserved, appear to have been written on parchment from which some former writing had been erased †. But if books and materials for writing were in those ages so scarce, good masters, who were capable of teaching the sciences to any purpose, were still scarcer, and more difficult to be procured. When there was not one man in England to the south of the Thames who understood Latin, it was not possible to learn that language, without sending for a teacher from some foreign country. In these circumstances, can we be surprised, that learning was so imperfect, and in so few hands? The temple of Science was then but a homely fabric, with few charms to allure worshippers, and at the same time surrounded with steep and rugged precipices, which discouraged their approach. When Alfred the Great formed the design of rendering learning more general than it had formerly been, he never dreamed of extending it to the common people, which he knew was quite impracticable, but only obliged persons of rank and fortune, by a law, to send their sons to school; and we have good reason to believe, that this was esteemed

\* Ingulph. Hist.

† Murator. Antiquitat, t. 3. p. 834.

a very hard law, and that it was not long Cent. XI.  
obeyed.

Besides the great difficulty of procuring mas- Methods  
of teaching  
the sci-  
ences, parti-  
cularly  
arithmetic,  
music, &c.  
ters who were capable of teaching the sciences, in the times we are now considering, the perplexing incommodious methods in which they were taught, rendered the acquisition of a moderate degree of knowledge a very tedious and laborious work. How difficult, for example, was the acquisition of arithmetic in this period, before the introduction of the Arabian figures, when the teachers of this science had no other marks for numbers but the following seven letters of the Roman alphabet, MDCLXVI, or the twenty-seven letters of the Greek alphabet\*? We are apt to be surprised to hear Aldhelm, the most learned and ingenious man of the age in which he lived, speaking of arithmetic as a science almost exceeding the utmost powers of the human mind, when we know that it is now acquired by every boy of a common capacity, with great ease, and in a little time †. But our surprise will cease, when we reflect on the great facility of expressing and managing numbers by the help of the Arabian figures, which were then unknown, but are now in common use: "The usefulness," says an excellent judge, "of these numeral figures, which we received from the Arabs, and they from the In-

\* See Bedæ Opera, Coloniae, A. D. 1612, p. 8.

† See p. 15.

Cent. XI. { “ dians, is exceeding great in all parts of arith-  
 “ metic; insomuch that we, to whom it is now  
 “ known, cannot but wonder how it was pos-  
 “ sible for the ancients to manage great num-  
 “ bers without it. And certainly such vast  
 “ numbers as we are now wont to consider,  
 “ could not in any tolerable way be managed,  
 “ if we had no other way of designing numbers  
 “ than by the Latin numeral letters MDCLXVI.  
 “ It is true the ancients had the same way of  
 “ distributing numbers that we have, collecting  
 “ units into tens, and tens into hundreds, and  
 “ hundreds into thousands, and thousands into  
 “ myriads, &c.; but they wanted a convenient  
 “ way of notation, or designation of them, pro-  
 “ portional to that distribution; insomuch that  
 “ when they came to thousands or myriads, they  
 “ had scarce any more convenient ways of de-  
 “ signing them than by words at length for  
 “ want of figures\*.” It was probably this want  
 of figures that gave rise to digital or manual  
 arithmetic; in which numbers were express-  
 ed, and calculations made, by the different po-  
 sitions of the hands and fingers. This appears  
 to us a childish play; but it was then a serious  
 study, and is explained at great length by ve-  
 nerable Bede†. Mankind commonly fall upon  
 various contrivances for accomplishing their de-  
 signs, before they hit upon that which is at once  
 the most easy and the most effectual. In this

\* Wallis's Algebra, c. 5.

† Bedæ Opera, p. 127, &c.

period, music was a most important part of a Cent. XI. learned education, and one of the four sciences which constituted the *quadrivium*, or highest class of philosophical learning. But the modes of teaching both the theory and practice of music, were so imperfect and incommodious, that the youth commonly spent nine or ten years in the study of it, to no great purpose, until Guydo Aretin, a monk of St Croix in Italy in the eleventh century, invented the scale or gamut now used, which greatly facilitated the acquisition of this science \*. The same observation might be made concerning the methods of teaching geometry, astronomy, and all the other sciences. These methods were so imperfect and perplexed, that it required much longer time, and greater degree of genius and application, to make any proficiency in these sciences, than it doth at present. For these reasons, we ought rather to felicitate ourselves on the happiness of our circumstances for the acquisition of knowledge, than to boast of our superior talents, or insult the memory of our ancestors on account of their ignorance, which was in a great measure unavoidable.

Every intelligent and attentive reader must have observed, that several branches of learning, which are now in high esteem, and much studied, have hardly been mentioned in the preceding history, as particularly geography, law, and me-

Some sciences not mentioned in the above history.

\* Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 651.

Cent. XI.

dicine. This hath not been owing to inattention, far less to any degree of disregard to these parts of learning, whose importance and utility are undeniable, but to the real state of things in the ages we are now examining, in which these sciences were very much neglected. A few observations, however, upon the state of these, and some other branches of learning, in this period, may not be improper in this place.

State of  
geography.

The prodigious extent of the Roman empire made the knowledge of geography necessary to government, and at the same time rendered the acquisition of it easy; but when that mighty empire was torn in pieces by the barbarous nations, the connection between its provinces was dissolved, and their geography neglected; for each of these illiterate nations, anxious to preserve the province which it had seized, had little or no curiosity to know the situation and state of other countries; and the intercourse between these nations for several ages was very inconsiderable \*. To the inhabitants of one country, in this dark period, all the other countries of the world were *terræ incognitæ*; of which they knew nothing, and about which they gave themselves little or no concern. Even the learned men of those ages being chiefly monks, confined to their cells, had little desire, and less opportunity, of knowing the situation, extent, climate, soil, productions, &c. of the several coun-

\* See Dr Robertson's excellent History of Charles V. vol. i. p. 325.

tries of the world. At present, indeed, a man Cent. XI.  
may become an excellent geographer, without  
stirring out of his elbow-chair, by the help of  
books, globes, charts, maps, and masters; but  
at that time they had no such means of obtain-  
ing this kind of knowledge. Travellers were  
also very few; and these few were either pil-  
grims or merchants, who travelled in quest of  
relics or of riches, and not of geographical  
knowledge. When all these circumstances are  
duly considered, we shall not be much surprised  
that geography was so much neglected, and so  
little known, in the ages we are now delineat-  
ing.

The Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, and State of law.  
for a century and a half after, had no written  
laws, but were governed by certain ancient and  
well-known customs, like their ancestors in Ger-  
many\*. In that period, therefore, law could  
not be considered as a science. Even after their  
laws were committed to writing, they were for  
a long time so short, plain, and inartificial, that  
little study was required to understand them.  
Accordingly, the far greatest part of the alder-  
men, sheriffs, and other judges of England,  
were for several ages very illiterate; and Alfred  
the Great was the first of our English kings who  
made the knowledge of letters a necessary qua-  
lification in those who were concerned in the

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 19.

Cent. XI. administration of justice \*. But that knowledge, which from thenceforward was esteemed requisite in a judge, could hardly be called learning; because it consisted in little more than a capacity of reading the doom-book in his mother tongue. This seems to have been all that was required of those who were called lawmen and wise-men, who were chosen to be sheriffs, judges, and assessors to the aldermen, in their county courts †. Though some collections of the laws and canons of the church were made in the eleventh century, the canon law had not acquired so much authority, or assumed such a regular form, as to be taught or studied as a science in the seminaries of learning in this period ‡.

State of  
medicine.

The desire of life and health is so natural to mankind, that the means of preserving these, and of healing wounds, bruises, fractures, &c. have been some part of their study in all countries, and in all ages. But among illiterate nations, like the Anglo-Saxons, the means employed for these purposes are not commonly the result of study and rational investigation; but consist in certain pretended secrets, or nostrums, handed down from one age to another, accompanied with many whimsical rites and incantations, to which they are supposed to owe

\* Asser. Vita Alfredi, p. 21.

† Murator. Antiquitat. t. I. p. 467, &c.

‡ Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 655.



their success. In this state of things, these medical secrets are for the most part in the possession of the most ignorant of the people; particularly of old women, who were the most admired physicians among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and several other nations, in the dark ages we are now examining. “One reason,” says a learned antiquary, “of the great influence of the women among the northern nations, is this: While the men are employed in hunting and war, the women, having much time upon their hands, spend some part of it in gathering and preparing herbs, for healing wounds and curing diseases; and being naturally superstitious, they administer their medicines with many religious rites and ceremonies, which excite admiration, and make the men believe that they are possessed of certain supernatural secrets, and a kind of divine skill\*.” After the Anglo-Saxons had embraced the Christian religion, they did not look with so favourable an eye on these superstitious ceremonies; and when the clergy began to apply a little to learning, they became dangerous rivals to the medical old women, who gradually sunk in their reputation. It appears, however, from many stories of miraculous cures related by the best of our ancient historians, that these clerical doctors were almost as superstitious as their female predecessors, and depended more on

Cent. XI.  


\* Keyser. Antiquitat. Septentrion. p. 371.

Cent. XI. the virtues of holy water, than of the medicines which they administered \*. After Alfred the Great set the example of translating books out of Latin into the Saxon language, some medical books were translated into that tongue; particularly L. Apuleius, concerning the virtues of herbs, which is still preserved in the Bodleian library, and is described by Mr Wanley in his catalogue of Saxon books †. By this, and other means, a few of the most studious and inquisitive of the clergy, and others, acquired some knowledge of physic; and before the conclusion of this period, there seem to have been some physicians, or rather surgeons, by profession, particularly in the courts of princes. In the court of the kings of Wales, the physician was the twelfth person in rank, and appears to have been chiefly employed in healing wounds and broken bones, for which he had by law certain established fees ‡. For curing a flesh-wound that was not dangerous, this court-physician was allowed no other perquisite but such of the garments of the wounded person as were stained with blood; but for curing any of the three dangerous or mortal wounds, he was allowed a fee of one hundred and eighty pence, and his maintenance, or of one pound without his maintenance, besides the blood-stained garments. The three dangerous or mortal wounds were

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 3, 4, 5, 6.

† Hickesii Thesaur. l. 2. p. 72.

‡ Leges Wallicæ, p. 44, &c.

these,—a wound on the head that discovered the skull,—a wound in the trunk of the body that discovered any of the viscera,—and the fracture of the legs or arms. If the court-physician performed the operation of the trepan in curing a wound in the head, he was allowed four pence extraordinary for performing that operation. When he made use of the red ointment in curing a wound, he might charge twelve pence for it; but when he used an ointment made of herbs, he could only charge four pence \*. We are not told the ingredients, nor the manner of preparing these ointments; and in general, it may be affirmed, that we are not furnished with authentic materials for composing a minute and particular history of physic in the Anglo-Saxon times.

The most agreeable reflection that can be made on the state of learning in Britain in the period we have been examining, is this,—that we have now passed through the most obscure uncomfortable part of that long night in which Great Britain, and all the other nations of Europe, were involved after the fall of the Roman empire, and are happily arrived upon the verge of day. For soon after the establishment of the Norman race of kings on the throne of England, several events happened which contributed to dispel that profound darkness which had so long prevailed, and to usher in the morning-

Cent. XI.

The darkest  
period end-  
ed.

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 41, &c.

Cent. XI. light of learning; so that we may safely promise  
those who have had the patience to attend us in  
this most gloomy part of our journey, more  
agreeable entertainment in all the succeeding  
stages.

“ ——— Now at last the sacred influence  
“ Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven  
“ Shoots far into the bosom of dim night  
“ A glimmering dawn \*.”

\* Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book 2. sub fin.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

---

BOOK II.

CHAP. V.

THE HISTORY OF ARTS IN GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE  
ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS, A. D. 499. TO THE LANDING  
OF WILLIAM DUKE OF NORMANDY, A. D. 1066.

**T**HE arts are so necessary to the support, and Importance of the arts.  
so conducive to the comfort of human life,  
that they are of the greatest importance to  
mankind in every age and country. Without  
the arts, the natural fecundity of the earth, the  
genial warmth of the sun, and the regular revo-  
lutions of the seasons, are of small avail: but  
by the almost creative power of art, barren de-  
serts are converted into fertile fields, covered  
with lowing herds, or golden harvests, inter-  
sprersed with pleasant villages, populous towns,  
and crowded cities. By the help of art, man-

kind acquire a kind of dominion over nature, penetrate into the bowels of the earth, travel over the waves of the sea on the wings of the wind, and make all the elements subservient to their purposes. In one word, the arts are the great means of promoting the populousness, power, and greatness, of states and kingdoms, as well as the felicity of individuals; and therefore few, we apprehend, will blame us for giving them a place in history. If this had been always done, the annals of mankind would have been more instructive and entertaining than they are. But, unhappily, the muse of history hath been so much in love with Mars, that she hath conversed but little with Minerva.

Decline of  
the arts in  
Britain.

The arts, like all other human things, are liable to vicissitudes: they often change their seats; and flourish at one time, and languish at another, in the same country. In the Roman times, as we have already seen, the arts were in a very flourishing state in this island, particularly in provincial Britain\*. But when the Roman power began to decline, the arts began to languish; and the most skilful artists of all kinds, dreading the depredations of the Saxons, Scots, and Picts, and finding neither security nor employment in this island, gradually retired to the continent. The final departure of the Romans, with the arrival of the Saxons, and the ruinous wars that followed, finished the destruction of

\* See book i. c. 5.

the arts. For the dastardly unwarlike Britons, not daring to face their fierce invaders in the field, took shelter behind those walls and ramparts which the Romans had erected; which drew upon *them* the desperate attacks of the Saxons, who never rested till they had laid them all in ruins. In the course of these wars, one city was taken and destroyed after another; so that, before the full establishment of the heptarchy, almost all the beautiful monuments of Roman art and industry in Britain were ruined or defaced. An ancient writer who was an eye-witness of these scenes of desolation, hath painted them in very strong colours. “ A fire was  
“ kindled by the sacrilegious hands of the  
“ Saxons, which spread from city to city, and  
“ never ceased until it had burnt up the whole  
“ surface of the island, from sea to sea, with  
“ its flaming tongue. The walls of all the colo-  
“ nies were beat down to the ground with bat-  
“ tering rams, and their inhabitants slain with  
“ the point of the sword. Nothing was to be  
“ seen in the streets, O horrible to relate! but  
“ fragments of ruined towers, temples, and  
“ walls, fallen from their lofty seats, besprinkled  
“ with blood, and mixed with mangled car-  
“ cases\*.” This barbarous and destructive method of proceeding was partly owing to the natural ferocity of the Saxons, and partly to the obstinate resistance of the Britons; by which

\* Historiæ Gildæ, c. 24.

that beautiful country, which the one struggled to conquer, and the other to defend, was stripped of all its ornaments in the scuffle. At the end of those long wars, when the Saxons obtained possession of the finest provinces of Britain, by the extirpation of their ancient inhabitants, they were really a barbarous and unhappy people, destitute of the most desirable accommodations, and of the arts by which they are procured; without models to imitate, or masters to teach them these arts. By this means we are once more reduced to the disagreeable necessity of viewing the arts, both necessary and ornamental, in a very rude imperfect state. An unpleasant object! on which our readers of the best taste will not wish us to dwell long.

Plan of  
this chap-  
ter.

In delineating the state of the arts in this period, we shall observe the same order as in the former; beginning with those which are necessary to the support and preservation of human life, and may therefore be called the necessary arts; and concluding with those which administer to its delight, and may therefore be called the pleasing or ornamental arts.

Arts of  
procuring  
food.

As nothing is so necessary to the preservation of human life as food, those arts by which it is procured must be of all others the most necessary; which are chiefly these four, hunting, pasturage, fishing, and agriculture.

Hunting.

Cæsar and Tacitus seem to differ in their accounts of the ancient Germans, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, with respect to hunting; the



former affirming, that they spent their whole time in hunting when they were not engaged in war; and the latter, that when they were not at war, they were not very much addicted to hunting, but spent the greatest part of their time in idleness or feasting \*. The reason of these different accounts, which were probably both true, seems to be this, that when Cæsar wrote, which was near two centuries before Tacitus, hunting was not merely an amusement among the Germans, but an art on which they very much depended for their subsistence; but when Tacitus wrote, agriculture was so much improved, that hunting was no longer a necessary art, but rather a diversion, which they followed only when they were prompted by inclination, and not by necessity. However this may be, it is sufficiently certain, that though our Anglo-Saxon ancestors did not disdain to use the game which they had caught in hunting, yet they did not very much depend upon it for their subsistence; and therefore, as hunting amongst them was rather a diversion than a necessary art, it will fall more naturally in our way in another place †.

At the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, this island Pasturage. abounded in numerous flocks and herds, which these conquerors seized; and pastured for their own use; and after their settlement, they still continued to follow pasturage as one of the

\* Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 21. Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 15.

† See Chap. 7.

chief means of their subsistence. This is evident from the great number of laws that were made in the Anglo-Saxon times, for regulating the prices of all kinds of tame cattle, directing the manner in which they were to be pastured, and for preserving them from thieves, robbers, and beasts of prey \*. As the Welsh in this period, from the nature of their country, and other circumstances, depended still more on their flocks and herds for their support, their laws respecting pasturage were more numerous and minute than those of the Saxons †. From these laws we learn, among many other particulars which need not be mentioned, that all the cattle of a village, though belonging to different owners, were pastured together in one herd, under the direction of one person (with proper assistants); whose oath in all disputes about the cattle under his care, was decisive ‡.

Fishing.

When we consider the situation of the countries inhabited by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, both on the continent and in this island, having so great a tract of sea-coast, and so many fine rivers, abounding with fish of all kinds, we can hardly suppose that they were ignorant of the art of fishing. We are assured, however, by venerable Bede, that the South-Saxons were so ignorant of this very necessary and useful art, that they could catch no other fish but eels, till they

\* Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* passim.

† *Id.* p. 94.

‡ *Leges Wallicæ*, passim.

were instructed by Wilfred Bishop of York, and his followers, who took shelter in their country A. D. 678. The people of the little kingdom of Sussex were at this time afflicted with such a dreadful famine, that great numbers of them perished with hunger, and others precipitated themselves from the rocks into the sea in despair. “ When the bishop,” says Bede, “ came into this kingdom, and beheld the miserable havoc that was made by the famine, he taught the poor people to procure some sustenance for themselves by fishing. For though their sea and rivers abounded with fish, they had not skill to catch any of them but a few eels. Having therefore collected all the eel-nets he could procure, the Bishop sent his own servants, with some others, out to sea; where, by the divine blessing, they caught three hundred fishes, of various kinds; which he divided into three equal parts, bestowing one hundred on the poor people of the country, another on those to whom the nets belonged, and keeping the third for the use of his own family. The Bishop gained the affections of the people of Sussex to a wonderful degree, by teaching them this useful art; and they listened more willingly to his preaching, from whom they had received so great a temporal benefit \*.” After the Christian religion was fully established in all the king-

\* Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 14.

doms of the heptarchy, the art of fishing became necessary on a religious account, as both the clergy and laity lived, some part of the year, chiefly on fish. This art seems to have been practised chiefly, if not wholly, by a particular set of slaves, in those times, who were bought and sold, together with their wives and children, the implements of their trade, and the places where they fished\*. We learn also from the laws of Ina King of Wessex, that some part of the rent of those farms which lay on the banks of rivers was paid in fish; which obliged the ceorls who occupied those farms, to employ some of their slaves in fishing†.

Agriculture  
among the  
Britons.

As agriculture is one of the most excellent and useful arts, and the chief means of improving and increasing the productions of the earth, for the support of human life, it merits our particular attention in every period. We have already seen, that this noble art had been carried to so great perfection in provincial Britain in the flourishing times of the Roman government, that it afforded very great quantities of corn annually for exportation‡. But agriculture, like all the other arts, declined with the declension of the Roman power in Britain, and was almost destroyed by the departure of that industrious people. This, however, was not so much owing to want of skill in the British husbandmen, who had been instructed by the Romans, as to the

\* Du Cange Gloss. voc. Piscatores.

† Spelman Gloss. voc. Firma.

‡ See vol. 2. p. 107.

cruel and frequent incursions of the Saxons, Scots, and Piets, who both destroyed the fruits of their labours, and interrupted them in the exercise of their art. For when they enjoyed some respite from these incursions for a few years, and were allowed to cultivate their lands in peace, these produced, as we are told by Gildas, the greatest abundance of all kinds of grain \*. After the arrival of the Saxons, the unhappy Britons were involved in such long wars, and so many calamities, that they gradually lost much of their skill in agriculture, and were at last expelled from those parts of the country that were fittest for cultivation. We need not be surprised, therefore, that the posterity of the ancient Britons, after they were confined to the mountains of Wales, were but unskilful husbandmen; and that they applied more to pasturage than to agriculture. This is evident from their laws, by which many mulcts, and even the prices of men's lives of all ranks, were appointed to be paid in cattle †. It appears, however, from these very laws, that agriculture was considered by the ancient Britons of this period as an object of very great importance, and made the subject of many regulations. By one of these laws, they were prohibited to plough with horses, mares, or cows, but only with oxen ‡. Their ploughs seem to have been very slight and inartificial; for it was

\* *Historia Gildæ*, c. 19.

† *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 26.—72, 201, 202, 203.

‡ *Id.* p. 283.

enacted, that no man should undertake to guide a plough who could not make one; and that the driver should make the ropes of twisted willows, with which it was drawn \*. But slight as these ploughs were, it was usual for six or eight persons to form themselves into a society for fitting out one of them, and providing it with oxen, and every thing necessary for ploughing; and many minute and curious laws were made for the regulation of such societies †. This is a sufficient proof both of the poverty of the husbandmen, and of the imperfect state of agriculture among the ancient Britons, in this period. If any person laid dung upon a field, with the consent of the proprietor, he was by law allowed the use of it for one year; and if the dung was carried out on a cart, in great abundance, he was allowed the use of the field for three years. Whoever cut down a wood, and converted the ground into arable, with the consent of the owner, was to have the use of it five years. If any man folded his cattle for a whole year upon a piece of ground belonging to another, with his consent, he was allowed to cultivate that ground for his own benefit four years ‡. All these laws were evidently made for the encouragement of agriculture, by increasing the quantity and improving the quality of their arable grounds. The British legislators of this period

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 283.

† *Id.* p. 52, &c.

‡ *Id.* *ibid.*

discover the greatest possible anxiety for the preservation of the fruits of the earth, and the labours of the husbandman; there being no fewer than eighty-six laws made for guarding them from every injury, or for repairing the injuries which they sustained\*. Nor was all this care unnecessary, in an open country, where cattle very much abounded, and corn was very scarce and precious. It is highly probable that agriculture was in the same, or perhaps in a more imperfect state, among the Scots and Picts, in the northern parts of this island; though we can say nothing with certainty on that subject, for want of authentic monuments. The ancient Britons in this period were not absolutely ignorant of the art of gardening; though their gardens seem to have produced nothing but a few apples and pot-herbs, with flax, leeks, and onions†. —It is now time to take a short view of the state of agriculture among the Anglo-Saxons in this period.

The ancient Germans, from whom our Anglo-Saxon ancestors derived their origin and manners, were not much addicted to agriculture, but depended chiefly on their flocks and herds for their subsistence‡. These restless and haughty warriors esteemed the cultivation of their lands too ignoble and laborious an employment for themselves, and therefore committed it

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 28.—298.

† Strabo, l. 7. *Cæsar. de Bel. Gal.* l. 6.

‡ *Id.* p. 286.

Among the  
English.

wholly to their women and slaves\*. They were even at pains to contrive laws to prevent their contracting a taste for agriculture, lest it should render them less fond of arms and warlike expeditions†. Those who inhabited the sea-coasts, and particularly the Angles, Iutes, Danes, and Saxons, were so much addicted to piracy, and depended so much on plunder for their subsistence, that they were more averse to, and more ignorant of, agriculture, than the other Germans. From all these circumstances, we may be very certain, that the Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in this island, were †much better warriors than husbandmen, more expert at wielding the sword than guiding the plough. For some time after their arrival, fighting was their only business; because corn, and all other provisions, were furnished to their hands by the Britons, according to agreement. Even after the commencement of hostilities between them and the Britons, they subsisted chiefly by plunder, until they had obtained an establishment, by the expulsion or extirpation of the greatest part of the ancient inhabitants, whose lands they divided amongst themselves. Having then no enemies to plunder, they found it necessary to give some attention to the cultivation of their lands, in order to raise those provisions which they could no longer procure by the point of their swords.

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 15.

† Id. c. 26.



The Saxon princes and great men, who, in the division of the conquered lands, obtained the largest shares, are said to have subdivided their estates into two parts, which were called the *inlands* and the *outlands*. The *inlands* were those which lay most contiguous to the mansion-house of their owner, which he kept in his own immediate possession, and cultivated by his slaves, under the direction of a bailiff, for the purpose of raising provisions for his family. The *outlands* were those which lay at a greater distance from the mansion-house, and were let to the ceorls or farmers of those times, at a certain rent; which was very moderate, and generally paid in kind\*. The owners of land were not at liberty to exact as high a rent from their ceorls or tenants as they could obtain; but the rates of these rents were ascertained by law, according to the number of hides, or plough-lands, of which a farm consisted. The reason of this seems to have been, that the first ceorls or farmers among the Anglo-Saxons were freemen and soldiers, and had contributed to the conquest of the country by their arms, and were therefore entitled to be treated with indulgence, and protected by law from the oppression of their superiors. By the laws of Ina King of the West-Saxons, who flourished in the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century, a farm consisting of ten hides or plough-lands was to pay the following

\* Reliquiæ Spelmanianæ, p. 12.

rent, viz. ten casks of honey,—three hundred loaves of bread,—twelve casks of strong ale,—thirty casks of small ale,—two oxen,—ten wethers,—ten geese,—twenty hens,—ten cheeses,—one cask of butter,—five salmon,—twenty pounds of forage,—and one hundred eels \*. There seems to be some mistake in the quantity of forage, which is too trifling to be mentioned, and the whole rent is very low, in proportion to the quantity of land; which may be considered as an evidence, both of the free and comfortable condition of the ceorls, and of the imperfect state of agriculture among the Saxons. In some places these rents were paid in wheat, rye, oats, malt, flour, hogs, sheep, &c. according to the nature of the farm, or the custom of the country †. There is, however, sufficient evidence, that money-rents for lands were not altogether unknown in England in this period ‡. The greatest part of the crown lands in every county, was farmed in this manner, by ceorls, who paid a certain quantity of provisions of different kinds, for the support of the king's household, according to the nature and extent of the lands which they possessed ||. “We have been “informed,” says the author of the black book in the exchequer, “that in ancient times our “kings received neither gold nor silver from “their tenants, but only provisions for the daily

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 25.

† Historia Eliensis, l. 1. c. 52.

‡ Spelman. Gloss. voc. Firma.

|| Id. ibid.

“ use of their household ; and the officers who  
“ were appointed to manage the king’s lands  
“ knew very well what kinds, and what quantities of provisions every tenant was obliged to  
“ pay. This custom continued even after the  
“ conquest, during the whole reign of William I. ;  
“ and I myself have conversed with several old  
“ people who had seen the royal tenants paying  
“ their rents in several kinds of provisions at the  
“ king’s court\*.” In some other countries of Europe, in this period, particularly in Italy, the rents of lands consisted in a certain proportion (most commonly the fourth or fifth part) of the different kinds of grain which these lands produced †. But in England the rents of land were much lower, on account of the more imperfect state of agriculture. If the lowness of the rents of lands in England in this period is a proof of the imperfection of agriculture, the lowness of their prices when they were sold is still a stronger evidence of the same fact, as well as of the great scarcity of money. In the ancient history of the church of Ely, published by Dr Gale, the curious reader will meet with accounts of many purchases of lands that were made by Æthelwold, the founder of that church, and by other benefactors, in the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, in the tenth century ‡. By carefully comparing all these accounts together, it plainly

\* Liber niger Scaccarii, l. 1. c. 7.

† Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 353.

‡ Hist. Britan. xv. a Tho. Gale edit. t. 1. p. 477, &c.

appears that the ordinary price of an acre of the best land, in that part of England, in those times, was sixteen Saxon pennies, or about four shillings of our money; a very trifling price indeed, not only in comparison of the prices of land in our times, but even in comparison of the prices of other commodities in those very times. For in the same history of the church of Ely, we are told, that Bishop Æthelwold, and Abbot Brithnod, in paying for an estate which they had purchased for that church, gave twenty sheep for twenty Saxon shillings, and one palfrey for ten of these shillings, of the price; from whence it follows, that four sheep were then of the same value with one acre of the best land, and one horse of the same value with three acres\*. This is so exceedingly different from the present state of things, that it would appear quite incredible, if it was not supported by the most unquestionable evidence. The frequent and deplorable famines which afflicted England, from time to time, in the course of this period, and carried off great multitudes of its inhabitants, afford a further and more melancholy proof of the wretched state of cultivation†. In particular, there was so great a scarcity of grain, A. D. 1043, that a quarter of wheat sold for sixty Saxon pennies, which contained as much silver as fifteen of our shillings, and were equal in value to seven or

\* Hist. Britan. xv. a Tho. Gale edit. t. I. p. 471.

† Chron. Saxon. p. 65, 123, 134, 157, &c.

eight pounds of our money \* : a most extravagant price, which must have involved not only the poor, but even those in the middle ranks of life, in the most extreme distress. In one word, we have sufficient evidence, that England, which in the Roman times was one of the great granaries of Europe, and afforded prodigious quantities of corn for exportation, was so ill cultivated by the Anglo-Saxons, that in the most favourable seasons it yielded only a scanty provision for its own inhabitants, and in unfavourable seasons was a scene of the most deplorable distress and scarcity.

When this was the state of agriculture, it will not be proper to spend much time in delineating the practices of the Anglo-Saxon husbandmen. Practices of the Anglo-Saxon husbandmen. They ploughed, sowed, and harrowed their fields; but as all these operations were performed by wretched slaves, who had little or no interest in their success, we may be certain that they were executed in a very slovenly and superficial manner: their ploughs were very slight, and (like those of the people of Shetland at present) had but one stilt or handle †. Though water-mills for grinding corn were well known to the Wisigoths in Spain, and the Longobards in Italy, as appears from the ancient laws of these nations, the Anglo-Saxons seem to have been unacquainted with them during some part of this

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 157.

† Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuthen. p. 296.

period ; and had no better way of converting their corn into meal, than by grinding it in hand-mills that were turned by women. By the laws of Ethelbert King of Kent, a particular mulct was imposed upon any man who debauched the king's grinding maid \*. Ina King of Wessex made several laws for the inclosing of arable lands, and regulating the proportion of grounds to be left in tillage at the departure of a tenant †. The lands belonging to the monasteries were by much the best cultivated ; because the secular canons who possessed them spent some part of their time in cultivating their own lands. Venerable Bede, in his life of Easterwin Abbot of Weremouth, tells us, “ That this abbot, being  
 “ a strong man, and of a humble disposition,  
 “ used to assist his monks in their rural labours,  
 “ sometimes guiding the plough by its stilt or  
 “ handle, sometimes winnowing corn, and some-  
 “ times forging instruments of husbandry with a  
 “ hammer on an anvil ‡.” For in those times the husbandmen were under a necessity of making many implements of husbandry with their own hands.

Art of gar-  
dening.

When the arts and practices of the husbandman were so imperfect, it cannot be supposed that those of the gardener had made greater progress. There is, however, sufficient evidence, that gardens were cultivated, and fruit-trees

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 3.

† Id. p. 25.

‡ Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. p. 296.

planted and ingrafted, in this period, particularly by the monks. Brithnod, the first abbot of Ely, is celebrated for his skill in gardening, and for the excellent gardens and orchards which he made near that monastery. “ He performed  
“ another great and useful work, which I think  
“ it is proper to relate to his praise. Being skill-  
“ ful in the arts of planting and gardening, and  
“ considering that the place would be more plea-  
“ sant and beautiful if it was surrounded with  
“ plantations, he laid out very extensive gardens  
“ and orchards, which he filled with a great  
“ variety of herbs, shrubs, and fruit-trees. In a  
“ few years, the trees which he planted and in-  
“ grafted, appeared at a distance like a wood,  
“ loaded with the most excellent fruits in great  
“ abundance, and added much to the commo-  
“ diousness and beauty of the place \*.”

The useful and necessary art of architecture Architec-  
ture. suffered no less than that of agriculture, by the departure of the Romans. That ingenious and active people, with the assistance of their British subjects, who were instructed by them, had adorned their dominions in this island with a prodigious number of elegant and magnificent structures, both for public and private use †. Some of these structures were built with so much solidity, that they would have resisted all the attacks of time, and remained to this very day, if they

\* Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, l. 2. c. 2.

† See vol. 2. p. 118, &c.

had not been wilfully destroyed\*. This was done by the Anglo-Saxons in the course of their long wars against the unhappy Britons: for it seems to have been a maxim with these ferocious conquerors, to destroy all the towns and castles which they took from their enemies, instead of preserving them for their own use.

Among  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

It cannot be supposed, that a people who wantonly demolished so many beautiful and useful structures, had any taste for the arts by which they had been erected. The truth is, that the Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in this island, were almost totally ignorant of these arts, and, like all the other nations of Germany, had been accustomed to live in wretched hovels, built of wood or earth, and covered with straw or the branches of trees: nor did they much improve in the knowledge of architecture for two hundred years after their arrival†. During that period, masonry was quite unknown and unpractised in this island; and the walls even of cathedral churches were built of wood. “There was a  
“time,” says venerable Bede, “when there was  
“not a stone church in all the land; but the cus-  
“tom was to build them all of wood.—Finan, the  
“second Bishop of Lindisfarne, or Holy-island,  
“built a church in that island A. D. 652, for a  
“cathedral, which yet was not of stone, but of

\* The famous edifice, called *Arthur's Oven*, on the banks of the Carron in Scotland, which was almost quit entire when it was taken down A. D. 1742, is a sufficient proof of this.

† Cluver. Antiq. German. p. 86, &c.



“ wood, and covered with reeds; and so it continued, till Eadbert, the successor of St Cuthbert, and seventh bishop of Lindisfarne, took away the reeds, and covered it all over, both roof and walls, with sheets of lead\*.” The first cathedral of York was built of the same materials; and a church of stone was esteemed a kind of prodigy in those times that merited a place in history. “ Paulinus, the first bishop of York, built a church of stone in the city of Lincoln, whose walls,” says Bede, “ are still standing, though the roof is fallen down; and some healing miracles are wrought in it every year, for the benefit of those who have the faith to seek them †.”

There does not seem to have been so much as <sup>In Scot-</sup> one church of stone, nor any artists who could <sup>land.</sup> build one, in all Scotland, at the beginning of the eighth century. For Naitan King of the Picts, in his famous letter to Ceolfred Abbot of Weremouth, A. D. 710, earnestly intreats him to send him some masons to build a church of stone in his kingdom, in imitation of the Romans; which he promises to dedicate to the honour of the apostle Peter, to whom the abbey of Weremouth was dedicated: and we are told by Bede, who was then living in that abbey, that the reverend Abbot Ceolfred granted this pious request, and sent masons according to his desire †.

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 4. l. 3. c. 25.

† Id. l. 2. c. 16.

‡ Id. l. 5. c. 21.

Masonry  
restored in  
England.

Masonry was restored, and some other arts connected with it introduced into England, towards the end of the seventh century, by two clergymen, who were great travellers, and had often visited Rome, where they had acquired some taste for these arts. These were, the famous Wilfrid Bishop of York, and afterwards of Hexham, and Benedict Biscop, founder of the abbey of Weremouth. Wilfrid, who was one of the most ingenious, active, and magnificent prelates of the seventh century, was a great builder, and erected several structures at York, Rippon, and Hexham, which were the admiration of the age in which he flourished \*. The cathedral of Hexham, which was one of these structures, is thus described by his biographer: " Having obtained a piece of ground  
" at Hexham from Queen Etheldreda, he there  
" founded a most magnificent church, which he  
" dedicated to the blessed apostle St Andrew.  
" As the plan of this sacred structure seems to  
" have been inspired by the spirit of God, it  
" would require a genius much superior to mine  
" to describe it properly. How large and strong  
" were the subterraneous buildings, constructed  
" of the finest polished stones! How magnifi-  
" cent the superstructure, with its lofty roof,  
" supported by many pillars, its long and high  
" walls, its sublime towers, and winding stairs!  
" In one word, there is no church on this side

\* Eddii Vita Wilfridi, c. 16. 17. 22. .

“ of the Alps so great and beautiful \*.” This admired edifice, of which some vestiges are still remaining, was built by masons, and other artificers, brought from Rome, by the munificence of its generous founder †. Benedict Biscop was the cotemporary and companion of Wilfrid in some of his journies, and had the same taste for the arts ‡. He made no fewer than six journies to Rome, chiefly with a view of collecting books, pictures, statues, and other curiosities, and of persuading artificers of various kinds to come from Italy and France, and settle in England. Having obtained a grant of a considerable estate from Ecgfrid King of Northumberland, near the mouth of the river Were, he there founded a monastery A. D. 674. “ About a year after the foundations of this monastery were laid, Benedict crossed the sea into France, where he collected a number of masons, and brought them over with him, in order to build the church of his monastery of stone, after the Roman manner ; of which he was a great admirer. His love to the Apostle Peter, to whom he designed to dedicate his church, made him urge these workmen to labour so hard, that mass was celebrated in it about a year after it was founded. When the work was far advanced, he sent agents into France, to procure, if possible, some glass-makers, a

\* Eddii Vita Wilfridi, c. 22.

† W. Malm. de Gestis Pontific. l. 3.

‡ Id. ibid.

“ kind of artificers quite unknown in England,  
 “ and to bring them over to glaze the windows  
 “ of his church and monastery. These agents  
 “ were successful, and brought several glass-  
 “ makers with them; who not only performed  
 “ the work required by Benedict, but instructed  
 “ the English in the art of making glass for  
 “ windows, lamps, drinking-vessels, and other  
 “ uses \*.”

Art of  
 making  
 glass.

From this authentic account, it appears, that it is now about eleven hundred years since this very elegant and useful art of making glass was brought into England. Before that period, the windows of houses and churches were filled either with linen cloth, or with lattices of wood. This we learn from the following account given by William of Malmsbury, of the great reparations that were made on the cathedral of York by Bishop Wilfrid, about the same time, and with the assistance of the same artificers. “ The  
 “ holy bishop was much grieved to see the de-  
 “ caying and almost ruinous state of the cathe-  
 “ dral church of York, which had been built  
 “ by King Edwin at the desire of Paulinus; and  
 “ immediately set about the reparation of it.  
 “ He restored the roof, and covered it with  
 “ sheets of lead; white-washed the walls with  
 lime, and put glass into the windows; some  
 “ of which had before admitted the light

\* Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuth.

“ through fine linen cloths, and others through  
“ lattices \*.”

But though these arts of building edifices of stone, with windows of glass, and other ornaments, were thus introduced by these two prelates in the latter part of the seventh century, they do not seem to have flourished much for several centuries. It appears from many incidental hints in our ancient historians, that stone buildings were still very rare in the eighth and ninth ages, and that when any such buildings were erected, they were the objects of much admiration. When Alfred the Great, towards the end of the ninth century, formed the design of rebuilding his ruined cities, churches, and monasteries, and of adorning his dominions with more magnificent structures, he was obliged to bring many of his artificers from foreign countries. “ Of these,” as we are told by his friend and companion Asserius, “ he had an almost “ innumerable multitude, collected from different nations; many of them the most excellent in their several arts †.” Nor is it the least praise of this illustrious prince, that he was the greatest builder and the best architect of the age in which he flourished. His historian, who was an eye-witness of his works, speaks in the following strain of admiration of the number of his buildings: “ What shall I say of the towns

\* W. Malms. de Gestis Pontific. p. 149.

† Asser. de Ælfredi Rebus gestis, p. 20.

“ and cities which he repaired, and of others  
“ which he built from the foundation, where  
“ there had been none before \* ?” Some of his  
buildings were also magnificent for that age,  
and of a new and singular construction; particularly the church of his new monastery of Æthel-  
linge; of which the reader may see a plan in  
the work quoted below †. This church, how-  
ever, was built only of wood; and it seems  
probable that Alfred’s buildings were in general  
more remarkable for their number and utility,  
than for their grandeur: for there is sufficient  
evidence, that long after his time, almost all the  
houses in England, and the far greatest part of  
the monasteries and churches, were very mean  
buildings, constructed of wood, and covered  
with thatch. Edgar the Peaceable, who flou-  
rished after the middle of the tenth century, ob-  
served, that at his accession to the throne, all  
the monasteries in England were in a ruinous  
condition, and consisted only of rotten boards ‡.  
Though the art of making glass was introduced  
in the seventh century, yet it was afterwards so  
much neglected, that no private houses had glass  
windows till after the conclusion of this period ||.  
In a word, several of our ancient historians  
agree, that the Anglo-Saxon nobility had no  
taste for magnificent buildings, but spent their

\* Asser. de Ælfredi Rebus gestis, p. 20.

† Vita Ælfredi Latine reddita, p. 131.

‡ W. Malms. l. 2. p. 32.

|| Anderson’s Hist. Commerce, v. 1. p. 90.

great revenues in mean, low, and inconvenient houses \*. This seems to have been owing in a great measure to the unsettled state of their country, and the frequent destructive depredations of the Danes, who made it a constant rule to burn all the houses, monasteries, and churches, wherever they came. From the few remains of Anglo-Saxon architecture which may still be seen in England, as well as from the direct testimony of venerable Bede, it plainly appears to have been a rude imitation of the ancient Roman manner, and very different from that which is commonly, though very improperly, called Gothic; of which so many noble specimens adorn our country †. The most admired of the Saxon churches seem to have been low and gloomy; their pillars plain and clumsy, their walls immoderately thick, their windows few and small, with semicircular arches at the top ‡.

If architecture was so imperfect in England in this period, we may conclude that it was not in a very flourishing state in the other parts of this island. This art appears to have been almost quite lost among the posterity of the ancient Britons, after they retired to the mountains of Wales. The chief palace of the kings of Wales, where the nobility and wise men assembled for making laws, was called the *white palace*, be-

State of  
architec-  
ture in  
Wales.

\* W. Malms. l. 3. J. Rossii, p. 106.

† Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. p. 295.

‡ Archæologia by the society of Antiquaries, London, p. 39. 140.

cause the walls of it were woven with white wands, which had the bark peeled off\*. By the laws of Wales, whoever burnt or destroyed the king's hall or palace, was obliged to pay one pound and eighty pence, besides one hundred and twenty pence for each of the adjacent buildings, which were eight in number, viz. the dormitory, the kitchen, the chapel, the granary, the bake-house, the store-house, the stable, and the dog-house †. From hence it appears, that a royal residence in Wales, with all its offices, when these laws were made, was valued at five pounds and eighty pence of the money of that age, equal in quantity of silver to sixteen pounds of our money, and in efficacy to one hundred and sixty. This is certainly a sufficient proof of the meanness of these buildings, which were only of wood. Even the castles in Wales, in this period, that were built for the security of the country, appear to have been constructed of the same materials; for the laws required the king's vassals to come to the building of these castles with no other tools but an axe ‡. These observations, and many others of the same kind that might be made from the ancient laws of Wales, serve to confirm the opinion of a very ingenious modern writer,—that there were few or no stone buildings in Wales before the reign of Edward I. of England ||.

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 6.

† *Id.* p. 136. 167.

‡ *Id.* p. 167.

|| Observations on the Welsh Castles, by the Honourable Daines Barrington, in *Archæologia*, p. 278.



The arts of building do not seem to have been much better understood by the Scots and Picts than by the ancient Britons, in the former part of this period. When Finan, the second Bishop of Lindesfarne, built a church of wood in that island, A. D. 652, he is said to have done it *more Scotorum*, after the manner of his countrymen the Scots; and it hath been already observed, that Naitan King of the Picts was obliged to bring masons from Northumberland, when he resolved to build a church of stone in his dominions, A. D. 710 \*. After this last period, it is probable that the Picts, and perhaps the Scots, began to learn and practise the art of masonry; because there are still some stone buildings of a very singular construction, and great antiquity, to be seen in Scotland. These buildings are all circular, though of two kinds, so different from each other, that they seem to be the works of different ages, and of different nations. The largest of these structures are in a very extraordinary taste of architecture: of which I have heard of no examples in any other part of the world. They are thus described by a modern antiquary, who viewed them with no little attention: “ Having arrived at the barrack of Glenelg, I was conducted to the remains of those stupendous fabrics, seated about two miles from thence, in a valley called *Glenbeg*, in which four of them anciently stood. Two of these are now

State of  
masonry in  
Scotland.

\* Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 25. l. 5. c. 21.

“ almost quite demolished : the third is half  
“ fallen down ; the fourth is almost entire.  
“ The first I met with lies towards the north side  
“ of the valley, and is called *Castle Chalomine*, or  
“ *Malcom's Castle*. It stands upon a considerable  
“ eminence, and affords us a fine prospect of  
“ the island of Sky, and a good part of the sea-  
“ coast. The foundation of this only appears ;  
“ as also of that other, on the east end of the  
“ valley, called *Castle Chonel*. About a quarter  
“ of a mile further, upon the bank of a rivulet,  
“ which passes through the middle of the glen,  
“ stands the third fabric, called *Castle Tellve*.  
“ I found it composed of stones, without cement ;  
“ not laid in regular courses, after the manner  
“ of elegant buildings, but rudely and without  
“ order : those towards the base were pretty  
“ large, but ascending higher they were thin  
“ and flat, some of them scarce exceeding the  
“ thickness of an ordinary brick. I was sur-  
“ prised to find no windows on the outside, nor  
“ any manner of entrance into the fabric, except  
“ a hole towards the west, at the base, so very  
“ low and narrow, that I was forced to creep in  
“ upon my hands and knees, and found that it  
“ carried me down four or five steps below the  
“ surface of the ground. When I was got within,  
“ I was environed betwixt two walls, having a  
“ cavity or void space, which let me round the  
“ whole building. Opposite to the little entry,  
“ on the outside, was a pretty large door, in the  
“ second or inner wall, which led me into the

“ arena or inner court. When I was there, I perceived that one half of the building was fallen down, and thereby had the opportunity of seeing a complete section thereof. The two walls join together at the top, round about, and have formed a large void space or arena in the middle. But to give a more complete idea of these buildings, I shall describe the fourth, called *Castle Troddan*, which is by far the most entire of any in that country; and from whence I had a very clear notion how these fabrics were originally contrived. On the outside were no windows, nor were the materials of this castle any wise different from those of the other already described, only the entry on the outside was somewhat larger: but this might be occasioned by the falling of the stones from above. The area of this makes a complete circle; and there are four doors in the inner wall, which face the four cardinal points of the compass. These doors are each eight feet and a half high, and five feet wide, and lead from the arena into the cavity between the two walls, which runs round the whole building. The perpendicular height of this fabric is exactly thirty-three feet; the thickness of both walls, including the cavity between, no more than twelve feet; and the cavity itself is hardly wide enough for two men to walk abreast; the external circumference is 178 feet. The whole height of the fabric is divided into four parts or stories, separated

“ from each other by thin floorings of flat stones,  
 “ which knit the two walls together, and run  
 “ quite round the building; and there have  
 “ been winding stairs of the same flat stones  
 “ ascending betwixt wall and wall, up to the  
 “ top. The undermost partition is somewhat  
 “ below the surface of the ground, and is the  
 “ widest; the others grow narrower by degrees,  
 “ till the walls close at the top. Over each door  
 “ are nine square windows, in a direct line above  
 “ each other, for the admission of light; and  
 “ between every row of windows are three others  
 “ in the uppermost story, rising above a cornice,  
 “ which projects out from the inner wall, and  
 “ runs round the fabric \*.” From this description of these singular edifices, it plainly appears, that they were designed both for lodging and defence; and considering the state of the times in which they were built, they were certainly very well contrived for answering both these purposes.

Circular  
Towers.

The stone edifices of the other kind, which were probably erected in this period, and of which some few are still to be seen in Scotland, are not so large as the former, but more artificial. They are slender, lofty, circular towers, of cut stone laid in regular rows, between forty and fifty feet in external circumference, and from seventy to a hundred feet high, with one door some feet from the ground†. They are exactly

\* Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, p. 166.

† *Id.* p. 165.

similar to the round tower of Ardmore, and several others, in Ireland; and therefore were probably built about the same time, which was in the tenth century; and for the same purposes; which are believed by some to have been for the confinement of penitents while they were performing penance. On this account these towers are always found in the neighbourhood of churches both in Scotland and Ireland; and are said to have been used in this manner: “The  
“ penitents were placed in the uppermost story  
“ of the tower (which commonly consisted of  
“ five or six stories); where having made probation or done penance, such a limited time,  
“ according to the heinousness of their crimes,  
“ they then were permitted to descend to the  
“ next floor; and so on by degrees, until they  
“ came to the door, which always faced the  
“ entrance of the church, where they stood to  
“ receive absolution from the clergy, and the  
“ blessings of the people \*.” A tedious process, to which few penitents in the present age would willingly submit. Other writers are of opinion, that the design of these circular towers (of which one is still remaining at Abernethy and another at Brechin) was, to be places from whence the people were called to public worship by the sound of a horn or trumpet, before the introduction of bells †.

\* *Archæologia*, vol. I. p. 307.† *Id.* vol. 2. p. 80.—85.

It is quite improper to spend much time in investigating the state of the carpenters and cabinet-makers arts, and of other artificers who wrought in wood in this period; as few or no specimens of their workmanship are now remaining. In general, we may be certain, that these artificers were very numerous, as almost all edifices, both public and private, as well as various kinds of furniture, arms, tools, &c. were made of wood; and amongst these there were, no doubt, some in each branch who excelled in their respective arts. The clearest positive evidence of this is still remaining; of which it will be sufficient to give one example: “With this  
“ wood the nave of the church of Croiland was  
“ built, and the tower constructed of strong  
“ and lofty beams, most exactly joined together before the death of Abbot Turkitull.  
“ After the death of that abbot, his successor,  
“ Egelric, built many beautiful edifices of the  
“ same materials. In particular, he erected an  
“ infirmary for the monks, of a proper length  
“ and breadth, with a chapel;—a bath, with  
“ other necessary houses;—a hall, and two  
“ large chambers, for the accommodation of  
“ strangers;—a new brewhouse, and a new  
“ bake-house;—very large granaries, and stables.  
“ All these edifices were constructed of beams  
“ of wood and boards, most exactly joined, and  
“ most beautifully polished, by the admirable

“art of the carpenter, and covered with  
“lead\*.”

As metals are more durable than wood, the state of the metallic arts is a little better known. The plumbers art must have been well understood in this period, as all the churches, and other edifices that were built of stone, were covered with lead; and even many of those that were constructed of wood. Artificers who wrought in iron were highly regarded in those warlike times; because they fabricated swords, and other offensive arms, as well as defensive armour. Every military officer had his smith, who constantly attended his person, to keep his arms and armour in order†. The chief smith was an officer of considerable dignity in the courts of the Anglo-Saxon and Welsh kings; where he enjoyed many privileges, and his weregeld was much higher than that of any other artificer‡. In the Welsh court, the king's smith sat next the domestic chaplain, and was entitled to a draught of every kind of liquor that was brought into the hall||.

As all the clergy were taught some mechanic art, and were obliged by the canons to exercise it at their leisure hours, many of them wrought in metals of different kinds, in which they became the most expert and curious artists§. The famous St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury,

Metallic  
arts.

Arts of  
working  
in silver,  
gold, and  
jewels.

\* Ingulf. Hist. Croiland.

† Leges Wallicæ, p. 66.

§ Johnson's Canons, vol. 1, A. D. 960. c. 51. A. D. 994. c. 3.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 25.

|| Id. Ibid.

who governed both church and state with the most absolute sway, was the best blacksmith, brazier, goldsmith, and engraver of his time. "He had an admirable genius," says his historian, "for various arts, and particularly excelled in writing and engraving letters, and in making any thing he pleased, in gold, silver, brass, and iron\*." Many trinkets made by this illustrious mechanic were long preserved in the church as the most precious relics, and objects of the highest veneration. "O miserable man that I am!" cries Osbern, "I confess that I have seen some of those works which he had made, that I have touched them with my sinful hands, have set them before my eyes, besprinkled them with my tears, and adored them on my bended knees†." Among the various artists collected by Alfred the Great, there were not a few who wrought in gold and silver, who, with the instructions of their royal master, performed several works in these precious metals of incomparable beauty‡. The truth of this assertion of the historian is abundantly confirmed by that most beautiful jewel, of exquisite workmanship, that was found at Ethelingey in Somersetshire; where this great prince concealed himself in his distress, and where he sometimes resided in his prosperity. This jewel was made by the command and direction of

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 94.

† Id. p. 96.

‡ Asser. Vita Alfred. p. 17.



Alfred, (as appears from the inscription upon it in the Saxon language and letters, to this purpose: —“ Alfred commanded me to be made,”)—and was certainly worn by that prince. It is a thin plate of gold enamelled, and most exquisitely engraved with various figures, of an oblong form, a little more than two inches long, and a little more than one inch broad ; of which the reader may find long and minute descriptions in the works quoted below \*. There is the clearest and most authentic evidence, that gold and silver were wrought into plate, coronets, bracelets, and various other ornaments and utensils, both before and after the age of Alfred the Great. The famous Bishop Wilfrid, who flourished about two centuries before Alfred, is said to have incurred much envy by his magnificence, and particularly by his great quantities of silver plate †. Queen Elgiva, the wife of King Ethelred, presented a chalice and patten of fine gold, weighing thirteen marks, about two pounds and a half, to the church of Canterbury ; and his second wife, Queen Emma, gave many ornaments of gold and silver to the church of Winchester ‡. But besides the gold and silver plate in the possession of the church, of which every convent and cathedral had a considerable quantity, many private persons had various ornaments and trinkets

\* Philosophical Transactions, No. 247. Hickesii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 12. Wotten's Conspectus, p. 18.

† Eddii Vita Wilfridi, c. 24.

‡ Monasticon, vol. 1. p. 2. Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 290.

of these precious metals, such as coronets, chains, bracelets, half circles for dressing their hair upon, collars, cups, &c.; as appears from their testaments, which are still preserved\*. Even the arts of polishing and setting precious stones were not quite unknown in England in this period: for Alfred the Great, having received a quantity of these from India (in the manner that shall be related in the next chapter), had them polished, and formed into jewels; some of which were remaining in the cathedral of Shereburn, when William of Malmsbury wrote his history of the bishops of that see†. The arts of gilding wood and metals with gold and silver were also known and practised. Stigand Bishop of Winchester is said to have made a very large crucifix, and two images, the one of the Virgin Mary, and the other of the Apostle John, and to have gilded them all, together with the beam on which they stood, with gold and silver, and set them up in the cathedral of Winchester‡. The English goldsmiths in this period were so famous for their excellence in their art, that the curious caskets, adorned with gold, silver, and precious stones, in which the relics of the saints were kept, were made in England, and known by the name of *Opera Anglica* (English works)||. The art of making gold and silver thread for

\* Hickesii Dissertatio Epistolaris, p. 51.

† W. Malms. de Gestis Pontificum Angl. l. 2.

‡ Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 293. || Murator. Antiq. t. 5. p. 12.

weaving and embroidering was not unknown in this period, as will by and bye appear. In one word, some pieces of workmanship were executed in gold and silver, in those rude times, that would be admired in the present age; of which it will be sufficient to give one example: among the furniture of Charlemagne, there were four tables, three of silver, and one of gold, all of extraordinary magnitude and weight. One of the silver tables was square, and beautifully en-chased with a plan of the city of Constantinople; another of them was round, and on it the city of Rome was represented in the same manner; the third, which was much larger and heavier, and of more admirable workmanship than the other two, contained, within three circles, a representation of the whole world, in figures most exquisitely minute and fine\*. How inestimable would the value of these tables be, if they were still remaining! Such of our readers as are desirous of knowing in what manner the artificers of those ancient times performed many of their most curious operations, in gilding and staining metals, ivory, wood, parchment, &c. may find a very ample collection of their receipts in the work quoted below †.

If we may depend upon the authority of their In Wales. laws, even the people of Wales, notwithstanding their poverty, and the low state of the arts

\* Egenhard. Vita Caroli Magni, sub fin.

† Muratori Antiquitates Medii Ævi, t. 2. p. 366.—387.

among them, were not unacquainted with gold and silver plate in this period. By one of these laws, an insult or injury offered to the King of Aberfraw was to be compensated in this manner: The guilty person, besides a certain number of cows, according to the extent of his estate, was to give to the king, whom he had affronted, a silver rod, as thick as his little finger, that would reach from the ground to his mouth when he sat in his chair; together with a gold cup, that would contain as much liquor as he could drink at once, with a cover as broad as his Majesty's face; and both the cup and cover were to be of the thickness of a ploughman's thumb-nail, or the shell of a goose's egg\*. This law certainly made it very imprudent to affront his Majesty of Aberfraw, especially if he happened to have a long breath and a broad face. But if the people of Wales had really such pieces of plate amongst them in those times, they were probably imported, and not manufactured by themselves.

Arts of  
clothing.

Though some of the arts employed about clothing are frequently carried much further than necessity requires, and were so in this period; yet it seems to be most proper, for preventing confusion, to consider them all in this place under the division of the necessary arts.

Not necessary to trace these arts to their origin.

None of the nations who inhabited this island at the arrival of the Saxons, were ignorant of

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 10.

the most essential branches of the clothing arts. It has been made appear already, that the Britons, Scots, and Picts, understood the arts of dressing both wool and flax, spinning them into yarn, and weaving them into cloth of various kinds and colours \*. Nor have we the least reason to suspect, that the Saxons were unacquainted with any of these essential operations at their arrival in Britain, as there is not the least surmise in history, that they were more imperfectly clothed than other nations. It will not therefore be necessary to trace any of these arts again to their origin, but only to take notice of such improvements as were made in them in the course of this period, and of such new inventions as were introduced.

We have no evidence that any of the British nations, at the beginning of this period, understood the arts of weaving various figures of men, or other animals, or flowers, foliages, &c. into cloth, or of embroidering them upon it after it was woven; but there is the clearest proof, that these very elegant and ingenious arts were practised in England before the end of the seventh century. In a book written by Aldhelm Bishop of Shereburn, about A. D. 680, in praise of virginity, he observes, that chastity alone did not form an amiable and perfect character, but required to be accompanied and adorned by many other virtues; and this observation he il-

Art of embroidery.

\* See vol. 2. p. 126.—133.

lustrates by the following simile, taken from the art of weaving;—" As it is not a web of one " uniform colour and texture, without any variety of figures, that pleaseth the eye, and " appears beautiful; but one that is woven by " shuttles, filled with threads of purple, and " many other colours, flying from side to side, " and forming a variety of figures and images, " in different compartments, with admirable " art\*." These figures were sometimes embroidered upon the cloth, with threads of gold, silver, and silk, of purple and other colours, as the nature of the figures to be formed required; and to render them the more exact, they were first drawn, with colouring matter, by some skilful artist. In the life of St Dunstan, we are told, that a certain religious lady, designing to embroider a sacerdotal vestment, earnestly intreated Dunstan (who was then a young man, and had an excellent taste for works of that kind) to draw the figures, which she afterwards formed with threads of gold †. The truth is, that those fine flowered and embroidered works, so much superior in art and beauty to what could have been expected in those rude ages, were commonly executed by ladies of the highest rank and greatest piety, and were designed for ornaments to the churches, and vestments for the clergy, when they performed the offices of re-

\* Aldhelm de Virginitate, in Bibliotheca Patrum, t. 13.

† Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 94.

ligion. We often read in the monkish historians of those times, of queens and princesses making presents of such precious and painted vestments (as they called them) to the church \*. The four princesses, daughters of King Edward the Elder, and sisters of King Ethelstan, are highly celebrated by historians for their assiduity and skill in spinning, weaving, and needlework ; which was so far from spoiling the fortunes of those royal spinsters, that it procured them the addresses of the greatest princes then in Europe †. A work of this kind, supposed to have been executed about the end of this period, by Matilda, wife of William Duke of Normandy, afterwards King of England, and the ladies of her court, is still preserved in the cathedral of Bayeux, and is an illustrious proof both of their skill and industry. This curious monument of antiquity is a piece or web of linen, only about nineteen inches in breadth, but no less than sixty-seven yards in length ; on which is embroidered the history of the conquest of England by William Duke of Normandy ; beginning with the embassy of Harold to the Norman court, A. D. 1065, and ending with his death at the battle of Hastings, A. D. 1066.‡. The many important transactions of these two busy years are represented in the clearest and

\* *Annales Eccles. Winton.* in *Angl. Sacra*, t. 1. p. 290.

† *W. Mahms.* l. 2. p. 26.

‡ *Memoires de Literature*, tom. 9. 12.

most regular order in this piece of needle-work ; which contains many hundred figures of men, horses, beasts, birds, trees, houses, castles, churches, arms, &c. &c., all executed in their due proportions and proper colours, with inscriptions over them, to throw light upon the history \*. Though Queen Matilda directed this work, yet the greatest part of it was probably performed by English women : for we are told by a contemporary writer, that the Anglo-Saxon ladies were so famous for their skill in needle-work, and embroidering with gold, that those elegant manufactures were called *Anglicum opus* (English work) †.

Art of dye-  
ing scarlet.

It hath been already proved, that the people of this island were not unacquainted with the arts of dyeing wool, yarn, and cloth, several different colours, in the former period ; yet it seems probable, that these arts received considerable improvements in the period we are now delineating ‡. In particular, the art of dyeing the scarlet colour, by the help of a small insect of the kermes or cochineal kind, appears to have been discovered about A. D. 1000 ||.

The fur-  
rier's art.

The furrier's art, or the art of dressing the skins of animals, without taking off the hair or wool, was much improved in this period ; be-

\* Memoires de Literature, tom. 9. 12. Mountfaugon Monumens de la Monarchie Française, t. 1. p. 371, &c.

† Gul. Pictavens. p. 211.

‡ See vol. 2. p. 128.

|| Murat. Antiquitat. t. 2. p. 415.



cause furs of all kinds were much worn, and highly valued for their warmth and beauty \*.

Though silk was worn by persons of high rank and great wealth, and also used for altar-cloths, &c.; yet, as we have no evidence that it was manufactured in England in this period, this is not the proper place to speak of it †.

Besides the fine needle-works and embroideries above described, which were executed chiefly by the ladies, various kinds of woollen cloths were fabricated by the professed artificers of Britain, in this period, for the use of all the different ranks in society. We are even told by a writer who flourished in those times, that the English makers of cloth very much excelled in their several arts ‡. This seems to be confirmed by the price of wool, which was higher than it is at present, in proportion to the prices of other commodities. For the fleece, by some of the Anglo-Saxon laws, was valued at two-fifths of the price of the whole sheep ||. It must, however, be confessed, that it is quite impossible, at this distance of time, and with the imperfect lights afforded us by our ancient writers, to give a particular account of the texture and properties of all the different kinds of cloth that were fabricated in England in this remote period.

The art of war must continue to be ranked among the necessary arts, until all nations be-

\* Murat. Antiquitat. t. 2. p. 409.

† See chap. 7.

‡ Gul. Pictavens. p. 211.

|| Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 23.

come so wise and equitable as to content themselves with their own territories and possessions, without invading those of others. This was very far from being the case in Britain in the period we are now considering, which was almost one continued series of invasions, wars, and plunderings, from the beginning to the end. In such unhappy circumstances, the study and practice of the arts of war became necessary to the preservation of the several British nations, and on that account merit a little of our attention.

Among  
the Britons,  
Scots,  
and Picts.

It is sufficient to refer the reader to what hath been already said concerning the manner of forming and commanding the armies of the ancient Britons, Scots, and Picts; because no changes seem to have been made by them in these particulars in the present period\*. Their arms and way of fighting were also much the same, except that war-chariots were wholly laid aside, and defensive armour came more into use among their princes and great men, in imitation of other nations, and particularly of the Anglo-Saxons. By the laws of Wales, all the fighting men were obliged to take the field, as often as they were called upon by the king, to defend their country when it was invaded; but they were not under any legal obligation to attend their prince in a foreign expedition above once in a year, nor to continue in it above six

\* See vol. 2. p. 142.

weeks\*. They were also bound to assist, as often as they were called upon, in building, repairing, and defending the royal castles †. But these castles, as hath been already observed, were very slight, and constructed only of wood.

The founders of the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in this island were a kind of soldiers of fortune, followed by armies of bold intrepid youths, whose arms were their only riches, and war their only trade and chief delight. To this martial spirit, which they derived from their ancestors the ancient Germans, they owed all their success in Britain; and they procured all their settlements by their swords, to which they had no other right. The same martial spirit and military arts were necessary to preserve their acquisitions, both from the ancient possessors, and from other adventurers like themselves, particularly the Danes. These circumstances made the study and practice of the arts of war of the greatest importance to the Anglo-Saxons, and render their military arrangements objects of curiosity to their posterity.

All the freemen and proprietors of land among the Anglo-Saxons, except the ministers of religion, were trained to the use of arms, and always ready to take the field. To this they were not only led by their ancient customs and warlike dispositions, but compelled by the necessity of their circumstances, and the obligation of

Among  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

All the  
freemen  
among the  
Anglo-  
Saxons  
were war-  
riors.

\* Leges Wallicæ, p. 71. 165.

† Id. ibid.

their laws. For every soldier in their victorious armies, when he received his proportion of the conquered country as the reward of his toils and valour, became bound to three things (commonly called the *trinoda necessitas*), which were esteemed indispensably necessary to the public safety and common good \*. The first and most important of these three services, to which all proprietors of land, and even all freemen of any considerable property, were subjected, was called in the Saxon language *furthfare*, or *outgoing*; which signified their taking the field with all necessary arms, whenever an army was to be formed for the defence of their country. This they were obliged to do under the severe penalty of forfeiting their lands, if they had any, and paying a heavy fine if they had no lands †. The second of these services, which all freemen and proprietors of land were obliged to perform, was also of a military nature, and consisted in building, repairing, and defending the royal castles ‡. To enable them to perform these services, all freemen and landholders were obliged to be constantly possessed of such arms as were necessary and suitable to their rank, which they were neither to sell, nor lend, nor pledge, nor alienate from their heirs ||. That they might be expert in the use of these arms when

\* Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 19.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 23. Spelman Concil. Britan. p. 520.

‡ Id. ibid. || Leges Edwardi Regis, apud Wilkins, p. 205.

they were called out to actual service, the freemen of each tithing, hundred, and county, were appointed to meet at certain stated times and places for the exercise of arms; and there was to be one general review of all the arms and armed men in all the counties of England upon one day in the month of May, that there might be no possibility of imposing upon the public by lending arms to each other\*. In a word, the freemen among the Anglo-Saxons, like their ancestors the ancient Germans, came to their hundred and county courts, and other public meetings, in arms; for which reason these meetings were commonly called *wcapon-tacks*, or *the touch of arms*; because every one touched the spear of the chief magistrate, who was present with his spear, in token of his submission to his authority, and readiness to fight under his command†. So much were they accustomed to the use of arms, that a spear in his hand was an essential part of the dress of an Anglo-Saxon thane or gentleman, by which he was distinguished, and without which he never stirred abroad. This is the reason that we meet with so many laws to prevent their doing mischief by wearing their spears in a careless manner‡.

The ministers of religion, both among the Pagan and Christian Saxons, were exempted from all military services, and forbidden the use

Clergy exempted from the obligation of bearing arms.

\* Leges Edwardi Regis, apud Wilkins, p. 205.

† Id. p. 203.

‡ Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 42.

of arms. The Pagan Northumbrians imagined their high priest Coifi was become mad, when they beheld him riding on a horse, with a spear in his hand, like a secular thane; “because they knew that it was not lawful for a priest to bear arms, or ride upon a horse\*.” The Christian clergy, after the conversion of the Saxons, enjoyed the same exemption from military services, and were laid under the same prohibition of bearing arms, that they might not be diverted from a constant attention to the duties of their sacred function †. But the lands that were granted to the church by kings and others, especially in the former part of this period, were subjected to the same military services with others, which the clergy performed by their ceorls or free tenants ‡.

Slaves not  
permitted  
to bear  
arms.

As the bearing of arms was esteemed the most honourable of all employments by the Anglo-Saxons, and all the other nations of Europe in this period, their numerous slaves were excluded from that honour, and from all military services, except in cases of the greatest national distress and danger ||. But when a slave was made free, a spear was put into his hand as one mark of his freedom, and he was thenceforward permitted to bear arms, and subjected to military services §.

\* Bedæ Hist. l. 2. c. 13.

† Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 19.

|| Murator. Antiq. l. 2. 445.

+ Spelman. Concil. p. 238.

§ Id. ibid.

From the above account of the military forces of the several Anglo-Saxon states, it plainly appears that they consisted of all the freemen of those states, who were of a proper age for bearing arms, the clergy alone excepted. This is, no doubt, the reason that we hear of such numerous armies raised even by the smallest nations of the heptarchy: for when a war broke out, the whole nation was up in arms, except such as were not capable, or had no right to bear them. After the establishment of the English monarchy, these martial regulations seem to have been relaxed, and the military forces of the nation gradually diminished.

Reason of  
the nu-  
merous  
armies  
among the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

The civil and military government of the Anglo-Saxons were perfectly similar, and executed by the same persons. The king was commander in chief of the whole army; an office which he commonly executed in person, but sometimes by a substitute, who was called the *cynings hold*, or *heretoga*, i. e. leader of the army\*. The alderman, or heretoga of each county, commanded the troops of the county, which formed a complete battalion; and were subdivided into trithings, commanded by the trithingmen; and these into hundreds, commanded by the hundredaries; and these again into tens, commanded by the decennaries, who were commonly called *sithcundem* or *conductors*, when they acted in their military capacity†.

Military  
govern-  
ment.

\* Spelman Gloss. p. 288.

† Somner. Diction. Saxon. in verb.

Troops  
and armies  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxon troops were of two kinds, infantry and cavalry. The infantry were composed of the ceorls, or lowest rank of freemen ; and the cavalry of the thanes, or freemen of greater property, who could afford to purchase and maintain their horses. The infantry were not all furnished with the same offensive weapons, some being provided with spears, others with axes, others with bows and arrows, and not a few with clubs, besides swords, that were common to them all. Few of the infantry had any other defensive armour than small round shields, with sharp spikes in their centres, which they wore on the left arm, and with which they wounded their enemies, as well as defended themselves. The cavalry were more uniformly armed, with long spears, which they carried in their right hands, and swords, which hung by a belt at their left sides. They were also much better provided with defensive armour; having, besides their large oval shields, which they wore on their left arms, helmets on their heads, and cuirasses, or coats of mail, on their bodies. The helmets of the Anglo-Saxons were of a conical shape, without vizors, or any other protection to the face, than a piece of iron which reached from the front of the helmet to the point of the nose. The swords, both of the infantry and cavalry, were very long and broad ; blunt at the point, and designed only for cutting. The saddles of their horses were of a very simple construction, all of them without cruppers, and



many of them without stirrups. The above description of the arms of the English in this remote period of their history, is chiefly taken from the representation of their army at the battle of Hastings, in the famous tapestry of Bayeux\*. All the different bodies of troops of which an Anglo-Saxon army was composed had standards, very much resembling those of the cavalry in modern Europe†. Some of the most ancient of our Anglo-Saxon kings were so fond of those military standards, that they had them carried before them when they travelled through their territories, even in times of peace‡.

We have good reason to believe, that the Anglo-Saxon youth were carefully trained to the dextrous use of their arms, and management of their horses, as well as instructed in the way of marching in regular order, and performing the necessary evolutions at their weapontacks and military reviews. “All the northern nations,” says Olaus Magnus, “are exceedingly expert and dexterous in handling their arms when they come to an engagement; because their youth are frequently exercised in mock fights, with swords, spears, bows and arrows, and other arms||. When the troops are assembled for a military expedition, they are first

\* See *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, t. 12.

† *Id. ibid.*

‡ *Bed. Hist. Eccles.* l. 2. c. 16.

|| *Historia Olai Magni*, l. 7. c. 6. p. 224.

“ divided into their several distinct bodies, with  
 “ their proper standards, under their respective  
 “ leaders, who explain to them the causes of  
 “ the war ; represent, in the strongest colours,  
 “ the cruelty and injustice of their enemies, and  
 “ the necessity of their fighting boldly for the  
 “ honour of their country ; and promise them  
 “ their full share of all the booty that shall be  
 “ taken ; after which they march with great  
 “ alacrity and good order\*.” The Anglo-Saxon armies were generally attended in their marches by a great number of carts or waggons loaded with arms and provisions, and sometimes with their wives and children ; and with these waggons they surrounded their camps in the night, which served as a fortification †.

Manner of  
 drawing  
 up their  
 armies,  
 and of  
 engaging.

When they came to action, which was generally as soon as they could find their enemies, they drew up their troops in various ways, according to the nature of the ground, the posture of the adverse army, or the particular views of their commanders ; though they commonly formed their spearmen into a figure called a *sow's-head* or *hollow wedge*, presenting the sharpest point of it to the enemy ‡. This figure, which was much used by the Franks, Saxons, and all the other northern nations, is thus described by an ancient writer : “ They form their troops into  
 “ the figure of a wedge, or of the Greek letter

\* Historia Olai Magni, l. 7. c. 6. p. 224.

† Cluver. Antiq. l. 1. c. 50. p. 319.

‡ Agathias, l. 2.

“  $\Delta$ ; the point of which towards the enemy is  
“ very sharp, and the sides gradually diverge,  
“ by which it becomes broadest at the rear.  
“ The ranks on all the three sides are very com-  
“ pact; and the men, standing with their faces  
“ outwards, and their backs towards the empty  
“ space in the middle, form a kind of rampart  
“ with their shields\*.” When an army was  
composed of several distinct battalions, or the  
troops of several different counties, under their  
respective aldermen and inferior officers, they  
often formed as many of these hollow wedges as  
there were battalions, at proper intervals†.  
This was certainly a very prudent regulation;  
for each of these bodies being composed of the  
inhabitants of the same county, fought bravely  
for the honour of their county, and in defence  
of their friends and neighbours. The cavalry  
of each county formed one squadron, and were  
commonly drawn up in the front of the infan-  
try. The waggons of the army, with the arms,  
provisions, women, children, sick, and wounded,  
were placed in a line in the rear, with proper  
guards, and made a kind of rampart for its de-  
fence. While these dispositions were making,  
there were frequently single combats between the  
boldest champions of each army, or skirmishes  
between flying parties; in which feats of the  
greatest bravery and dexterity were exhibited.  
When both armies were ready for action, the

\* Cluver. *Antiq. German.* l. 1. c. 50.† *Id. ibid.* p. 321.

commanders in chief, and other officers, made short animating speeches : and the signal of battle being given by the sound of trumpets, horns, &c., the troops on both sides advanced with martial songs, loud shouts, and clashing of arms, which made a most terrible and tremendous noise \*. The first shock between the cavalry of the two contending armies was ordinarily very furious ; after which the archers, and then those armed with spears, swords, battle-axes, clubs, &c. came to action ; the battle raged, and blood streamed from ten thousand wounds. In this way of fighting, much depended on bodily strength and intrepidity ; and when two armies were nearly equal in numbers and valour, battles were very long and very bloody. As the rage of the combatants was much inflamed by the length and violence of the struggle, the victors made a dreadful havoc among the fugitives, and spared few that they could destroy : nor was it uncommon, especially among the Danes, to put their prisoners to death in cold blood, and with the most cruel tortures †. It would be easy to illustrate and confirm every particular in the above description, by examples taken from our history in this period ; but this would be as tedious as it is unnecessary.

Great number of battles fought in this period.

The number of battles that were fought in this period in England, to say nothing of skir-

\* Cluver. *Antiq. German.* l. 1. c. 50. p. 324, &c.

† *Chron. Saxon.* p. 73. 80, &c.

mishes, is almost incredible; and therefore we may reasonably suppose, that this pernicious art of shedding human blood was brought to greater perfection than other arts that were more useful and beneficent. We learn from the best authority, that King Ethered and his brother Alfred, fought no fewer than nine pitched battles, besides many skirmishes, against the Danes in one year (871) \*. The truth is, that war not only raged almost without interruption, in those unhappy times, but also appeared in its most horrid aspect, and was productive of the most deplorable calamities, especially to the vanquished. For victorious armies too often did not content themselves with the destruction of those who had opposed them in the field, but wreaked their vengeance also on defenceless slaves, women, and children.

The observations which have been already made on the civil, may be applied to the military architecture of the Anglo-Saxons. They were both very imperfect; and for that reason it will not be necessary to spend much time in delineating their methods of fortifying, defending, and attacking strong places. The Saxons, in the course of their long wars against the Britons, destroyed many of the fortifications that had been erected by the Romans; and after their settlement in Britain, they neglected to repair those that remained, or to build any of their

\* Chren. Saxon. p. 81.

own. By this means, this country became almost quite open and defenceless; which greatly facilitated the incursions of the Danes, who met with little obstruction from fortified places. Alfred the Great seems to have been the first of the Anglo-Saxon kings who was sensible of this defect, and endeavoured to provide a remedy. This admirable prince, after he had reduced the Danes, and restored the tranquillity of his country, spent much of his time and revenues in repairing the ruined walls of London and other cities, and in building forts in the most convenient places, for the protection of his subjects. "What shall I say," cries his historian, "of the cities which he repaired, and of the royal forts and castles which he built of stone and wood, with admirable art; in doing which he met with much opposition and trouble from the indolence of his people, who could not be persuaded to submit to any labour for the common safety? How often, and how earnestly, did he beseech, intreat, and at length command and threaten, his bishops, aldermen, and nobles, to imitate his example, and build castles for the defence of themselves, their families, and friends? But, alas! such was their invincible sloth and inactivity, that all his persuasions, commands, and threats, had little influence upon them; and they either did not build at all, or did not begin to build till it was too late, and their enemies came upon them before their works were

“ finished. It is true, indeed, when they be-  
“ held their parents, wives, children, friends,  
“ and servants, killed or taken prisoners, and  
“ their goods and furniture destroyed, they be-  
“ wailed their own folly, and applauded the  
“ prudence of their sovereign, which they had  
“ before reproached \*.” His own daughter  
Elfreda, governess of Mercia, seems to have  
been the only person in the kingdom who pro-  
perly complied with the commands, and imitated  
the example, of her illustrious father. For that  
heroic princess, who inherited more of the wis-  
dom and spirit of Alfred than any of his chil-  
dren, not only fought many battles against the  
Danes, but also built many castles to check  
their incursions. In Henry of Huntingdon, we  
have the names of no fewer than eight castles  
that were built by Elfreda in the short space of  
three years†. From this time, the building,  
repairing, and defending castles, became an ob-  
ject of public attention, and one of the three  
services to which all the lands of England were  
subjected. When we reflect on the low state of  
the arts, and particularly of architecture, among  
the Anglo-Saxons, we cannot suppose that their  
castles were either very strong or very beau-  
tiful. They generally consisted of two parts, a  
bass-court, and a keep or dungeon. The bass-  
court was a piece of ground, sometimes about

\* Asser. de Rebus gestis Alfredi, p. 17. 18.

† Hen. Hunt. Hist. p. 204.

an acre in extent, surrounded with a high and thick stone wall, with a garreted parapet on the top; from whence the garrison discharged their weapons on the assailants. This wall had also many small windows, or rather slits, in it, very narrow in proportion to their height, through which they shot their arrows. The lodgings for the officers and soldiers were built in the area, and along the inside of the wall. At one end of the bass-court was a round mount, sometimes artificial, and sometimes natural, on which the keep or dungeon stood, which was a circular stone building, with thick and high walls. From the top of this building, which was flat, the garrison had an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, that they might discover the approaches of their enemies; and from thence also the chief defence was made. The body of the keep, which sometimes consisted of several stories, contained the lodgings of the commander of the castle; and in the bottom was the prison, under ground, and without light; from whence the whole building was often called the dungeon. Such was the general plan of the Anglo-Saxon castles; though the different tastes of their builders, situations of the ground, and other circumstances, sometimes occasioned considerable deviations from this plan \*. The vestiges of Danish castles, or rather camps, are still visible in many parts of Britain, of a circular form,

\* See Dr Borlase's *Antiquities of Cornwall*, l. 4. c. 9.



surrounded with ditches and ramparts; but do not merit a more particular description in a general history \*.

The arts of fortifying and attacking towns and castles commonly improve or decay together, and bear a due proportion to each other; and therefore, though the Anglo-Saxon castles above described must appear to us exceedingly weak and artless, they afforded no less advantage and security to their defenders, than the most regular fortifications do to theirs in the present age; because the modes of attacking them were feeble and artless in the same degree. For the most part, they were attempted to be taken by a sudden bold assault; by wounding and killing their defenders with stones, arrows, darts, and spears; by scaling their walls, and bursting open their gates, or setting them on fire. These are the methods which we see practised in the attack of a castle, in the famous tapestry of Bayeux †. When the defenders of a town or castle were disposed to surrender, the commander, putting the keys of it on the point of his spear, reached them over the wall; and from thence they were taken by the general of the besieging army ‡. If the assailants were repulsed, they seldom returned to the charge, or persisted in their enterprise; for we meet with very few sieges of any length in the Anglo-Saxon history. Alfred the Great seems to have been the only person who had any idea

Arts of attacking strong places.

\* See Dr Borlase's *Antiquities of Cornwall*, l. 1. c. 8.

† *Memoires de Literature*, t. 12. p. 100.

‡ *Id. ibid.*

of a blockade, or confining a garrison within their walls, cutting off their supplies, and obliging them to surrender for want of provisions \*. A great variety of military engines were invented in the middle ages, for battering the walls of towns and castles, and for throwing stones of a prodigious weight, which were the artillery of those times; but we have not sufficient evidence that those engines were used in Britain in this period; and therefore it is not proper to introduce the account of them in this place †. The truth is, that the arts of fortifying, defending, and besieging places of strength, were very much improved by the Normans; which will render this part of the military art more worthy of a minute investigation in the sixth volume of this work.

General observation on the state of the necessary arts.

Such seems to have been the state of the necessary arts in this island, and particularly among the Anglo-Saxons, in this period. The fondest admirers of antiquity will not deny, that all these arts were very imperfect, in comparison of what they had been in provincial Britain in the Roman times, and of what they are at present.

The fine arts.

It is now proper to take a short view of the state of the fine or pleasing arts of sculpture, painting, poetry, and music.

Sculpture among the Pagan Saxons.

If the sculptor's and statuary's art doth not owe its origin, it certainly owes its greatest improvements, to idolatry. Nations who worship

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 95.

† Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 473.

images naturally encourage those amongst them who have any taste or genius for the art of making them; and those artists as naturally exert all their skill in making the objects of worship in as perfect a manner as possible. As the Anglo-Saxons, at their settlement in this island, were idolaters, they had probably some amongst them who had the art of carving in wood, or cutting in stone the images of their gods, Woden, Thor, Frea, &c.; though in a rude and clumsy style. That they had idols or statues of their imaginary deities in their temples, we have the clearest evidence in the letter written by Pope Boniface to Edwin King of Northumberland, A. D. 625. These idols are spoken of at great length, and he is exhorted to destroy them\*. When Coifi, the chief priest of the Northumbrian Saxons, was converted to Christianity, A. D. 627, he overturned the altars, and broke down the statues of their gods, in the great temple at Godmundham near York. The shapes of the statues of the Anglo-Saxon deities, with their various emblems, are still preserved in several authors†.

When the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity, in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries, their idols were destroyed, and the art of making them not only neglected as useless, but abhorred as impious. But that art did not long continue in a state of neglect

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 10.

† Ailet Sammes Britan. Antiq. p. 446. Verstegan's Restitution, &c.

Among the Anglo-Saxons after their conversion to Christianity.

and detestation; for the images of the saints having been introduced into many of the Christian churches on the continent, it was not long before they found their way into some of the churches in this island. At first these images were imported from Rome, probably because there were no artists in Britain who could make them; but by degrees, as the demand for them increased, the art of making them was revived \*. As very few specimens of the Anglo-Saxon sculpture are now remaining, we cannot form an exact judgment of their taste and manner. In general, we may conclude, that their works, like those of their contemporary artists of France and Italy, were awkward, stiff, and flat †. For when the art of masonry was so imperfect as it hath been represented, it is not to be imagined that the art of sculpture had attained to any great degree of perfection. Those who have an opportunity of viewing the figures in basso-relievo, on the baptismal font at Bridekirk in Cumberland, or those on the pillar in the churchyard of Buecastle, in the same county, or those of the obelisk in the church of Ruthwel in Anandale, which were all cut in this period by the Dano-Saxon inhabitants of those parts, will probably be of this opinion.

Paintings  
imported.

The painters as well as sculptors of the ages we are now considering, were chiefly employed

\* Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weirmuthen. p. 295. 297.

† See Montfaucon Monumens, t. 1. Murator. t. 2. dissertat. 24.

in working for the church, by drawing pictures of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and other saints. The practice of adorning churches with pictures, begun in the East, was early introduced at Rome, and from thence spread into all the other countries of Europe where Christianity was established \*. The first pictures that were used for the ornament of the Anglo-Saxon churches in this island, were brought from Rome. Benedict Biscop, the founder of the monastery of Weremouth, as we are told by venerable Bede, imported great numbers of these pictures from Rome, for the use of the church of his monastery. “ In his fourth  
“ voyage, A. D. 678, he brought from Rome  
“ many pictures of the saints, for the ornament  
“ of the church of St Peter, which he had built,  
“ viz. a picture of the Virgin Mary, the mother  
“ of God,—and the pictures of the twelve apos-  
“ tles, which he hung up in the body of the  
“ church, on a partition of wood, from the south  
“ to the north wall,—pictures of the gospel-  
“ history, with which he decorated the south  
“ wall,—and pictures of the visions of St John  
“ in the Apocalypse, with which he adorned the  
“ north wall; that all the people who entered  
“ this church, though ignorant of letters, might  
“ contemplate the amiable aspect of Christ and  
“ his saints in these pictures, wherever they  
“ turned their eyes †.” Benedict having built

\* Du Pin. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. in Epiphani.

† Bed. Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. p. 295.

another monastery at Iarrow, and dedicated the church of it to St Paul, made another journey to Rome, to procure ornaments for his new church and monastery, A. D. 685. “ Benedict “ having constituted Esterwin abbot of his mo- “ nastery of St Peter at Weremouth, and Ceol- “ frid abbot of his monastery of St Paul at Iar- “ row, made a fifth journey to Rome; from “ whence he returned with a great treasure of “ sacred things, as usual; particularly a great “ number of religious books and pictures; for “ at this time he brought pictures of the whole “ gospel-history, with which he covered the “ walls of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, “ which he had built in his larger monastery at “ Weremouth. For the ornament of the church “ of St Paul, in his monastery of Iarrow, he “ brought pictures of the concord of the Old “ and New Testaments, executed with wonder- “ ful art and wisdom. For example, the pic- “ ture of Isaac carrying the wood on which he “ was to be sacrificed, and the picture of Christ “ carrying the cross on which he was to be cru- “ cified, were placed next to each other; and, “ in like manner, the serpent lifted up by Mo- “ ses in the wilderness, and the Son of Man “ lifted up on the cross\*.” From the above ac- count, given by one who spent his whole life in the monasteries of Weremouth and Iarrow, and daily saw the pictures which he describes, it plainly appears, that these two churches, in the

\* Bed. Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. p. 295.

north of England, in the seventh century, were adorned not only with many single portraits, but also with a considerable collection of historical paintings; and if we were as well informed of the state of some other churches, we should perhaps find, that they were no worse provided in these ornaments.

As the veneration and demand for the pictures of the saints increased, the inconveniency of bringing them all from foreign countries was sensibly felt; and therefore such of the English, particularly of the clergy, as had a taste for painting, applied to that art, in order to furnish their own churches with these admired ornaments. The famous St Dunstan, who seems to have been an universal genius, was esteemed an excellent painter by his cotemporaries, and employed his pencil only on religious subjects\*. A picture of Christ, drawn by this sainted artist, with his own picture prostrate at its feet, and several inscriptions in his own hand-writing, are still preserved in the Bodleian library†. So necessary were the pictures of the saints believed to be, that no church could be consecrated without some relies, and the picture of the saint to which it was dedicated. At the first introduction of these pictures into the Anglo-Saxon churches, it was pretended that they were intended only to be helps to devotion, and a kind of books for the instruction of those who could

Paintings  
executed in  
England.

\* *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 94.

† *Hickesii Thesaur.* t. 1. p. 144.

not read the scriptures; and it was with these views that venerable Bede contended for their lawfulness and expediency \*. But the veneration of the people for these pictures did not long stop here, but gradually increased to the most gross and impious idolatry; which occasioned a prodigious demand for these objects of devotion, and no doubt brought the art of painting to greater perfection in this period than many of the other arts. Portraits of other persons, besides canonized saints, particularly of the dignified clergy, appear to have been very numerous. “Styward,” says William of Malmsbury, “was appointed abbot of Glastonbury, A. D. 981. The pictures of this abbot are a sufficient proof that his manners were very suitable to his name, for in all these pictures he is represented with a whip, or rod for discipline, in his hand †.” Even history-painting, representing the principal actions of the lives of great princes and generals, do not seem to have been very uncommon in England in this period. Eddelfleda, widow of the famous Brithnod Duke of Northumberland, in the tenth century, presented, to the church of Ely, “a curtain, which had the history of the great actions of her deceased lord painted upon it, to preserve the memory of his great valour, and other virtues ‡.”

\* Bedæ Opera, t. 8. de Templo Salomonis, c. 19.

† W. Malms. Antiq. Glaston. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 317.

‡ Hist. Elien. l. 2. c. 7.



The arts of colouring and painting glass were <sup>Painting on glass.</sup> probably known and practised in England in the ages we are now considering. If we could be certain that the figures of Alfred the Great, and of his grandson Athelstan, in the window of the library of All-Souls college at Oxford, had been brought from Beverley, where they had been painted not long after the age in which these princes flourished, we should have an opportunity of judging of the state of that curious art in this period \*. In that large collection of receipts for performing various works of art, in the eighth century, preserved in the work quoted below †, there are directions for staining glass several different colours, in order to form figures and pictures of Mosaic work.

But of all the pleasing arts, poetry was the <sup>Art of poetry much cultivated in this period.</sup> most admired and cultivated by all the nations of Britain, in the ages we are now delineating. In the fifth chapter of the first volume of this work, we have attempted to account for that strong propensity to the sublime and ardent strains of poetry which hath appeared in all nations, in the most early period of their history, when they were emerging from the savage state ‡. Whatever becomes of that account, the fact is undeniable, and is confirmed by the ancient history of all those nations of Germany and Scandinavia, from whom the Anglo-Saxon and Dano-Saxon

\* Vita Ælfredi a Spelman, tab. 2.

† Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 370.

‡ See vol. 2. p. 168.

inhabitants of Britain derived their origin, as well as by that of the Celtic tribes, (who possessed the warmer regions of Europe), from whom the ancient Britons were descended. This poetic fire was not extinguished by the chilling blasts, and almost eternal frosts, of the north; but burnt with as intense a flame under the arctic circle as under the equator. The truth is, that the mountains of Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and even Iceland, were the favourite seats of the Muses in this period; and from some of those countries they accompanied their votaries into this island. "All the ancient inhabitants of the north," says an excellent antiquary, "composed, in rhymes and verses, accounts of all things that deserved to be remembered, either at home or abroad, that they might be more easily instilled into the minds of men, might make the deeper impressions on their memories, and be more effectually handed down to posterity\*." Every bold adventurer, when he set out on any piratical or military expedition, if he was not a great poet himself, which was frequently the case, never neglected to carry with him the best poets he could procure, to behold and celebrate his martial deeds†. We may be certain, therefore, that all the leaders of the several armies of Saxons, Angles, Jutes, and Danes, who formed settlements, and erected kingdoms, in this island,

\* Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 176.

† Id. p. 195.

brought their poets with them, to sing their exploits and victories. The most ancient of those historical and military songs have been long since lost; but we have good reason to believe, that it is to them we owe many particulars in the most ancient part of our history. Some of our historians honestly confess, that they had no other authority for what they related but those ancient poems; and one of those songs, on the great victory which Athelstan obtained over the Scots and Danes A. D. 938, is inserted *verbatim* in the Saxon chronicle, and literally translated by Henry of Huntingdon \*. Another of those ancient poems, on the death of King Edgar, and the succession of his son Edward, A. D. 975, is inserted in the same chronicle †.

Never were poetry and poets so much admired and honoured as in the present period. The greatest princes were no less ambitious of the laurel than of the royal crown. Alfred the Great was the prince of poets, as well as the best of kings, and employed his poetic talents to enlighten the minds and civilize the manners of his subjects ‡. Aldhelm, who was a prince of the royal family of Wessex, and Bishop of Sherburn, was also the best poet of his age; and his poems were the delight and admiration of the English several centuries after his death ||. Ca-

Poetry  
and poets  
greatly  
honoured  
in this  
period.

\* Wil. Malms. p. 3. Chron. Saxon. p. 112. Hen. Hunt. p. 204.

† Chron. Saxon. p. 122.

‡ Vita Ælfredi, p. 92.

|| Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 4.

nute the Great was also a famous poet ; and the first stanza of a song composed by him may be seen in the work quoted below \*. Poets were the chosen friends and favourites of the greatest kings ; they seated them at their tables, advanced them to honours, loaded them with riches, and were so much delighted with their sweet and lofty strains, that they could deny them nothing. “ We the bards of Britain, whom our  
“ prince entertaineth on the 1st of January, shall  
“ every one of us, in our rank and station, enjoy  
“ mirth and jollity, and receive gold and silver  
“ for our reward.—Happy was the mother  
“ who bore thee, who art wise and noble, and  
“ freely distributest rich suits of garments, thy  
“ gold and silver. Thy bards celebrate thee,  
“ for presenting them thy bred steeds, when they  
“ sit at thy tables. I myself am rewarded for my  
“ gift of poetry, with gold and distinguished respect. Should I desire of my prince the moon  
“ as a present, he would certainly bestow it on  
“ me †.” The poets of the north were particularly famous in this period, and greatly caressed by our Anglo-Saxon kings. “ It would be  
“ endless,” says an excellent antiquary, “ to name  
“ all the poets of the north who flourished in the  
“ courts of the kings of England, or to relate  
“ the distinguished honours and magnificent  
“ presents that were heaped upon them ‡.

\* Hist. Eliens. l. 2. c. 27.

† Specimens of Ancient Welsh Poetry, p. 34. 36.

‡ Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 195.

The same writer hath preserved the names of no fewer than eight of those Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic poets, who flourished in the court of Canute the Great, King of Denmark and England, and enjoyed the favour of that prince \*. It seems to have been one of the chief amusements of the greatest princes in this period to hear the poems of their bards, to read their works, and even commit their verses to memory. Alfred the Great, as we are told by his intimate friend and companion Asserius, amidst that infinite multiplicity of affairs in which he was engaged, never neglected to spend some part of his time every day in getting Saxon poems by heart, and teaching them to others †. This, too, was also a very capital part of the education of the royal and noble youth of those times ‡.

The poems of those ancient bards of the north are said to have produced the most amazing effects on those who heard them, and to have roused, or soothed, the most impetuous passions of the human mind, according to the intention of their authors. Revenge, it is well known, rages with the greatest violence in the hearts of warlike fierce barbarians, and is of all their passions the most furious and ungovernable; and yet it is said to have been subdued by the enchanting power of poetry. Egil Skallagrim, a famous poet of those times, had quarrelled with Eric Blodox,

Astonishing power of poetry.

\* Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 243.

† Asser. de Rebus gestis Alfredi, p. 13.

‡ Id. ibid.

King of Norway ; and in the course of that quarrel had killed the king's son, and several of his friends ; which raised the rage of Eric against him to the greatest height. Egil was taken prisoner, and sent to the king, who was then in Northumberland. No sooner was he brought into the presence of the enraged monarch, who had in his own mind doomed him to the most cruel tortures, than he began to sing a poem which he had composed in praise of his royal virtues, and conveyed his flattery in such sweet and soothing strains, that they procured him not only the forgiveness of all his crimes, but even the favour of his prince \*. The power of poetry is thus poetically described in one of their most ancient odes : “ I know a song by which I soften  
 “ and enchant the arms of my enemies, and  
 “ render their weapons of none effect. I know  
 “ a song which I need only to sing when men  
 “ have loaded me with bonds ; for the moment  
 “ I sing it my chains fall in pieces, and I walk  
 “ forth at liberty. I know a song useful to all  
 “ mankind ; for as soon as hatred inflames the  
 “ sons of men, the moment I sing it they are  
 “ appeased. I know a song of such virtue, that  
 “ were I caught in a storm, I can hush the  
 “ winds, and render the air perfectly calm †.”

The poets of  
 nature, and  
 not of art.

Those ancient bards, who had acquired so great  
 an ascendant over the minds of their ferocious

\* Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 195.

† Bartholin, p. 347. Northern Antiquities, vol. 2. p. 217.

countrymen, must certainly have been possessed of an uncommon portion of that poetic fire, which is the gift of nature, and cannot be acquired by art. This is directly asserted by one who was well acquainted with their works: “ In other  
“ languages, any person of common understand-  
“ ing may make verses of some kind; and, by  
“ constant practice, may even become expert at  
“ making them; but in our Dano-Saxon lan-  
“ guage, no man can become a poet of the  
“ lowest order, by any efforts, unless he is in-  
“ spired with some degree of the true poetic  
“ flame. This sacred fire, like all the other  
“ gifts of nature, is bestowed in very unequal  
“ measures. There are some who can compose  
“ excellent verses by the help of thought and  
“ study, while others, blessed with a greater  
“ portion of the true poetic spirit, pour forth a  
“ torrent of verses of all kinds with perfect ease,  
“ without premeditation. This happy genius  
“ for poetry, discovers itself even in infancy, by  
“ such manifest indications, that it cannot be  
“ mistaken, and is observed to be most ardent  
“ about the change of the moon. When a  
“ poet of this high order and fervid spirit is  
“ speaking of his art, or pouring out his verses,  
“ he hath the appearance of one that is mad or  
“ drunk. Nay, the very external marks of this  
“ poetic fury, are in some so strong and ob-  
“ vious, that a stranger will discover them at  
“ first sight to be great poets, by certain sin-  
“ gular looks and gestures, which are called in

“ our language *Skallviingl*, i. e. the poetical  
“ vertigo \*.”

Curious ac-  
count of one  
of those an-  
cient poets.

Venerable Bede gives a very curious account of a Saxon poet, called *Cædmon*, a monk in the abbey of Streaneshalch, (now Whitby), in the seventh century, who exactly answered the above description. The most sublime strains of poetry were so natural to this ancient bard, that he dreamed in verse, and composed the most admirable poems in his sleep, which he repeated as soon as he awoke. A part of one of those poems is preserved in King Alfred's Saxon version of Bede's history, and is much admired by those who are most capable of forming a right judgment of its merit †. Bede gives a Latin translation of the exordium of this poem, but confesseth that it falls short of the beauty of the original; “ for it is impossible,” says he, “ to translate “ verses that are truly poetical, out of one lan- “ guage into another, without losing much of “ their original dignity and spirit ‡.” For this reason, I shall not attempt an English translation of this curious fragment. *Cædmon* was a man of low birth, and little or no learning, but possessed so great a portion of that divine enthusiasm with which the true poet is inspired, that he turned every thing he heard into the sweetest verses, without any toil or effort. As he was a

\* Olai Wormii *Literatura Danica*, p. 193.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. Saxonice reddita, p. 595. Hiccesii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 197.

‡ Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 24.



monk, and, according to the mode of those times, a pious man, he employed his poetic talents only on religious subjects, and composed poems on all parts of the Old and New Testament. "He sung," says Bede, "the creation of the world,—the origin of mankind, and the whole history of the book of Genesis,—the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt,—their taking possession of the land of promise, and many other scripture histories. He sung of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour; of the giving of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching of the apostles. In a word, he composed poems on the divine blessings and judgments,—on the terrors of the last day,—on the joys of heaven, —the pains of hell,—and on many other religious subjects, to deter men from the love of vice, and excite them to the love and practice of virtue\*." All the works of this ancient poet of nature are unhappily lost, except the small fragment above mentioned, which is the most venerable relic of the Dano-Saxon language and poetry. For the learned Dr Hickes is of opinion, that the poetical paraphrase on the book of Genesis, published by Junius as Cædmon's, is not really the work of that ancient bard †.

\* Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 24.

† See the most perfect copy of this fragment in Wanleii Catalog. Lib. Septentrional. p. 287.

Language  
of those  
ancient  
poets.

The language of the Saxon, Danish, and other northern poets, was highly figurative and metaphorical; but those figures and metaphors were not the arbitrary inventions of every particular poet, but established by ancient and universal practice. This prevented, in some measure, that obscurity, which so constant a succession of strong figures would otherwise have occasioned. Rogvald, Earl of the Orkney isles, who was a famous poet as well as a great warrior, compiled a kind of dictionary of those established figures and metaphors, for the use both of poets and their readers, which he entitled the *Poetical Key* \*. Many of those poetical metaphors were taken from the ancient Pagan theology and mythology of the northern nations. For example, heaven was “the scull of the giant Imar;”—the rainbow was “the bridge of the gods;”—gold was “the tears of Freya;”—poetry, “the present, (or) the drink of Odin;”—the earth, the “spouse of Odin, the flesh of Imar, (or) the daughter of night;”—a battle, “the hail of Odin,” &c. All these, and many others of the same kind, were allusions to particular fables in the Edda †. But the far greatest number of these poetical metaphors were taken from the appearances, properties, and uses of natural objects. Thus, herbs and plants were “the hair of the earth, (or) the fleece of the earth;”—the

\* Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 195.

† Northern Antiquities, vol. 1. p. 395.

sun, “ the candle of the gods ;”—the sea, “ the field of pirates, the girdle of the earth, the country of whales ;”—ice, “ the greatest of bridges ;”—a ship, “ the horse of the waves ;”—a combat, “ the bath of blood, (or) the clang of bucklers ;”—arrows, “ the birds of war, (or) the snakes of war ;”—soldiers, “ the wolves of war ;”—the tongue, “ the sword of words ;”—the soul, “ the treasure of the breast, (or) the keeper of the bony house,” &c. &c. \* But after all, this profusion of metaphors and other figures, together with the very involved arrangement of the words, of which many are purely poetical, and never used in prose, render the style of the Saxon, Danish, and other northern poets, not a little obscure to the greatest proficient in those languages among the moderns, though perhaps it appeared sufficiently clear to their cotemporaries.

The rules and measures of the versification of the ancient Saxon and Danish poet, are still more obscure, if not quite inexplicable. This is owing to the great singularity, prodigious artifice, and almost endless variety of the kinds and measures of their verses. “ The different kinds of verses,” says one of the best judges, “ composed by the Saxon, Danish, and Icelandic poets, were almost innumerable : for such was the greatness and fertility of their genius,

Rules of  
versifica-  
tion.

\* Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. 395. Hiccesii Thesaur. t. i. p. 199.

“ that there was no end of their inventions. It  
 “ may, however, be observed, that the number  
 “ of the different kinds of verses commonly used  
 “ by these poets, did not exceed one hundred  
 “ and thirty-six, without including that kind  
 “ in which our modern poets so much delight,  
 “ which consists wholly in ending every two  
 “ lines with similar sounds. The harmony of  
 “ these different kinds of verses did not con-  
 “ sist only in the succession of long and short  
 “ syllables, according to certain rules, as among  
 “ the Greeks and Romans; nor in the similar  
 “ sounds of the terminating syllables, as among  
 “ the moderns; but in a certain consonancy  
 “ and repetition of the same letters, syllables,  
 “ and sounds, in different parts of the stanza,  
 “ which produced the most musical tones, and  
 “ affected the hearers with the most marvellous  
 “ delight \*.”

Rules of  
 the drot-  
 quat, or  
 common  
 song.

Our ears, being quite unaccustomed to these ancient modes of versification, cannot be susceptible of the impressions of their harmony but in a very imperfect degree; and therefore a very particular account of them would neither be pleasing nor instructive. It may not, however, be improper to gratify the curiosity of our readers, by laying before them the rules of one of these kinds of verse, which will enable them to form a general idea of all the rest. The

\* Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 177, 192.

kind of verse most proper for this purpose, is that which was called *Drotquæt* or *common song*, being that which was most commonly used in singing the praises of their kings and heroes. This kind of verse was constructed in the following manner.

Each verse or line consisted of six syllables, each distich of two lines, and each stanza of four distichs, or eight lines.

The harmony of this kind of verse in each distich was partly literary and partly syllabical.

The literary harmony consisted in this, that three words in each distich should begin with the same letters, two in the first line of the distich, and one in the second. These initials were called the sonorous letters.

The syllabical harmony consisted in this, that there should be two syllables of similar sounds in each line, which were called the sonorous syllables.

This syllabical harmony was either perfect or imperfect. It was perfect when the similar syllables consisted both of the same vowels and consonants; imperfect when they consisted of the same consonants, but not of the same vowels. The syllabical harmony might be imperfect in the first line of a distich, but it was always to be perfect in the second.

All these rules are illustrated and exemplified in the two following Latin lines, which form a distich of the *drotquæt* or *common song* of the Danes and Saxons. The sonorous letters and

syllables are in capitals, that they may be more readily distinguished.

“ ChrISTus Caput nOSTrum

“ CorONet te bONis.”

In this distich C is the sonorous letter, and begins two words in the first line, and one in the second. In the first line, IST and OST are the two sonorous syllables, but imperfect, consisting of the same consonants, but not of the same vowels. ON and ON are the sonorous syllables in the second line, being perfect, as consisting both of the same vowels and consonants, all agreeable to the above rules. Four such distichs formed a complete stanza of the *drotquæt*; of which the reader will find several examples, as well as a more minute description, in the learned and curious work so often quoted on this subject\*.

Great variety of versification.

It is easy to perceive, from the above example, that this alliterative and syllabical harmony was capable of almost endless variations, by changing the length of the verses, the number and position of the sonorous letters and syllables, and by other methods. This gave the Saxon and Danish poets great opportunities of displaying their genius, by producing so many different species of verse. Nor was this kind of harmony, arising from the repetition and artful disposition of similar sounds and letters, peculiar

\* Olai Wormii *Literatura Danica*, in Append.

to the scalds or poets of England and Scandinavia; but was cultivated, in some degree, by those of all the other nations of the world of whom we have any knowledge. Of this a thousand examples might easily be produced, in various languages; but the reader will probably be satisfied with a few from the most celebrated Latin poets, which he will find in a note\*.

This mode of versification continued to be occasionally used by the poets of England long after the conclusion of the period we are now examining. The following example, from the visions of Pierce Plowman, published about the middle of the fourteenth century, may be taken both as an illustration and a proof of this. This specimen will be found to approach very near to the rules of the *drotquæt* or common song above described, but deviates a little from them, and thereby shews what small variations produced a new kind of verse.

Example in  
English.

“ In a somer season,  
“ When hot was the sun,  
“ I shope me into shroubs  
“ As I a shepe were,  
“ Inhabit as an harmet,  
“ Unholy of werkes,

---

\* O Tite ! tute Tati tibi tanta tyranni tulisti. *Ennius*.

Non potuit paucis plura plane proloqui. *Plautus*.

Libera lingua loquuntur ludis liberalibus. *Navius*.

Thesca cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur. *Catullus*.

Ductores Danaum delecti prima virorum. *Lucretius*.

Pectora plausa cavis, et colla comantia pectunt. *Virgilius*.

Vide plura apud *Hicksii Thesaur.* t. 1. p. 195. 196.

“ Went wyde in this world  
 “ Wonders to hear \*.”

Had a great  
 regard to  
 quantities.

Besides this alliterative harmony, the Saxon and Danish poets are believed to have had as strict a regard to the harmonious succession of long and short syllables as those of Greece and Rome; which afforded them another mean of multiplying their modes of versification. Their language was much better fitted for this kind of harmony than modern English, as it had not near so great a proportion of words of one syllable, and as its quantities were much better fixed and ascertained †. “ The Anglo-Saxons,” says one of the greatest critics, “ conscious of  
 “ the dignity, elegance, sweetness, and har-  
 “ mony of their language, were much ad-  
 “ dicted to poetry. That kind of verse in which  
 “ they most delighted was the Adonian (con-  
 “ sisting of one long, two short, and two long  
 “ syllables), though they sometimes deviated a  
 “ little from the strict rules of that measure.  
 “ For as the Greek and Latin poets, when they  
 “ wrote Iambicks, did not always adhere to the  
 “ strictest laws of that kind of verse, but made  
 “ use of various liberties; so the Anglo-Saxon  
 “ and Dano-Saxon poets allowed themselves  
 “ equal liberties in composing their Adonics ‡.”

\* See Relics of ancient English Poetry, second edit. vol. 2. p. 296, &c.

† Hiccsii Thesaur. t. I. p. 188.

‡ Wanleii Catalog. in Prefat. sub fin.



The truth is, that a very great number of the Anglo-Saxon verses now remaining are Adonics, or something very like them\*.

Though the Saxon, Danish, and other northern scalds, had no fewer than one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of verse, without including rhyme, there is the clearest evidence that they were not unacquainted with this last species of versification. To say nothing of their introducing rhyme into their Latin poetry, there are not a few of their poems in their own language still extant, which are most exactly rhymed, and some of them have even double rhymes†. So many different methods had the ancient poets of Britain and Scandinavia, of pleasing the ears, and delighting the imaginations, of their countrymen, while those of modern Europe are limited to a very few!

All the observations that have been made above, concerning the versification of the Saxon scop or poets, and of the northern scalds‡, may be applied to the bards of Wales and Scotland in this period. For though the languages in which the scalds and bards sung their tuneful strains, were as different as it is possible for any two languages to be, yet there appears to have

\* Hiccsii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 189. &c.

† Northern Antiquities, vol. 1. p. 309.

‡ The Saxon name for poet was *scop* or *sceop*, from the verb *sceoppian*, "to shape (or) make;" the Danish name was *scald*, from *scaldre*, "to polish."

been a very surprising similarity between their modes of versification, both being exceedingly various, and chiefly of the alliterative kind. Whether this similarity was owing to the Welsh bards having imitated the Saxon scop's and Danish scalds, (as some imagine), or to something in nature, and the state of society, which directed them all to pursue the same course, (as others fancy), it is not easy to determine \*. The poetic genius of the provincial Britons was much depressed during their long subjection to the Romans; but it revived when they recovered their liberty, and shone forth in its meridian lustre, when they were engaged in their long and bloody struggle with the Saxons †. The bards then raised their voices, and roused their countrymen to fight bravely in defence of their country, their liberty, their parents, wives, children, and religion, by the most animating strains. It was in this period (the sixth century) that Taliesin, the king of bards, Ancurin, Llywarch-Hen, Cian, Talhiarn, and all the most famous Welsh poets, flourished ‡. But unfortunately the works of some of these poets are lost, and those of the others become obscure, and almost unintelligible ||.

Various  
kinds of  
poems.

It would swell this article beyond all proportion, to enumerate and give examples of all the

\* See Northern Antiquities, vol. 2. p. 196, &c.

† See vol. 2. p. 190.

‡ Evan Evan Dissertatio de Bardis.

|| Id. *ibid.*

different kinds of poems composed by the British, Saxon, and Danish poets, of this island, in this period. The subjects of their songs were as various as their versification. To say nothing of their religious hymns, and their poems in praise of saints, which were very numerous, they inflamed the courage of combatants, and taught the battle to rage, by their martial songs: they celebrated the exploits, and sung the victories, of heroes, and preserved the memory of all great events, in their historical compositions: the beauties of the fair, and the joys and cares of virtuous love, were not forgotten: nor did they neglect to lash the vices of bad men by their satires, or to lament the sorrows of the disconsolate by their elegies, or to increase the pleasures of festivity by their mirthful glees. Examples of all these kinds of poems, and of several others, may be seen in the books quoted below\*.

Music was as much admired and cultivated <sup>Music.</sup> as poetry, by all the nations who inhabited this island in the period we are now examining. These two pleasing arts were inseparable and universal. The halls of all the kings, princes, and nobles of Britain, rung with the united melody of the poet's voice and the musician's harp; while every mountain, hill, and dale, was vocal. The poet and the musician was indeed

\* Hiccesii Thesaur. t. 2. Bartholin. de Causis cotemp. Mortis. Olai Literatura Danica. Shiffer Hist. Lapon. Five pieces of Runic Poetry. Specimens of ancient Welsh Poetry, &c.

most commonly the same person ; who, blessed at once with a poetical genius, a tuneful voice, and skilful hand, sung and played the songs which he had composed. Talents so various and delightful, were objects of ambition to the greatest monarchs, and procured the meanest who possessed them, both riches, honours, and royal favour. Alfred the Great, who united every pleasing to every great accomplishment, excelled as much in music as he did in war ; and ravished his enemies with his harp, before he subdued them with his sword. “ Not long “ after,” says one of the best of our ancient historians, “ Alfred ventured to leave his hiding-place in the isle of Æthelingey, and gave “ a proof of his great wisdom and dexterity. “ For, taking his harp in his hand, and pretending to be a poet and musician, he entered the Danish camp, attended only by one “ faithful friend. Being admitted into the “ royal tent, he entertained the king and his “ nobles, several days, with his songs and music, and thereby had an opportunity of gaining all the intelligence he desired\*.” We learn from the same historian, that Anlaff, the Danish king of Northumberland, practised the same stratagem against King Athelstan, and almost with the same success. “ He sung so “ sweetly before the royal tent, and at the “ same time touched his harp with such exqui-

\* W. Mahms. l. 2. c. 4.

“ site skill, that he was invited to enter; and  
 “ having entertained the king and his nobles  
 “ with his music while they sat at dinner, he  
 “ was dismissed with a valuable present\*.”

The famous Egil Skillagrim, the Norwegian poet already mentioned, was so great a favourite with the same King Athelstan, on account of his musical and poetical talents, in which he equally excelled, that he loaded him with riches and honours, and could deny him nothing†. The first musician, who was also a poet, was the eighth officer in dignity in the courts of the kings of Wales, and had a place in the royal hall, next to the steward of the household‡. But it would be endless to produce all the proofs that occur in history of the high esteem in which those who excelled in music were held in the courts of the Danish, Saxon, and British princes of this period.

Some skill in vocal and instrumental music, Music universally cultivated. seems to have been necessary to every man who wished to mingle in decent company; and to be without it was esteemed disgraceful. This appears from a very curious passage in Bede's account of the religious poet Cædmon. “ This  
 “ extraordinary person was so devout and pious,  
 “ that he could never make any poems on com-  
 “ mon and trifling subjects; and no strains ever  
 “ proceeded out of his mouth, but such as

\* W. Malm. l. 2. c. 6.

† Arngr. Ionas. Islandic. l. 2. p. 129.

‡ Leges Wallicæ, p. 35.

“ breathed a spirit of piety and religion. Even  
 “ before he became a monk, when he was in a  
 “ secular state of life, in which he continued till  
 “ he was of an advanced age, he never learned  
 “ any of those frivolous songs that were in  
 “ common use. Of these he was so totally ig-  
 “ norant, that when he happened to be at an  
 “ entertainment, and it was proposed, as usual,  
 “ that every person present should sing and play  
 “ on the harp in his turn, to increase the fes-  
 “ tivity of the company ; as soon as he saw the  
 “ harp, which was handed about, approaching  
 “ near to him, he arose, sneaked out of the  
 “ company, and retired to his own house\*.”

Alfred the Great, in his Saxon version of Bede's history, suggests the reason of this conduct of Cædmon, viz. that he was ashamed to discover his ignorance of two such common accomplishments as those of singing and playing on the harp †. Cædmon, before he became a monk, was a person in the very lowest rank of life, being employed in keeping a gentleman's cattle, under the direction of an overseer ; and his companions seem to have been of the same humble station, as there was but one harp in the company. This shews how universal some skill in vocal and instrumental music was in the period we are now considering ; and that these two kinds of music were inseparable. For these people

\* Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 24.

† Id. *ibid.* a Smith, edit. p. 597. See *Relics of ancient Poetry*, vol. 1. p. 50.

seem to have had no idea of singing without playing on the harp at the same time, or of playing on the harp without singing.

It would be quite superfluous to spend any time in proving, that the harp was the favourite musical instrument of the Britons, Saxons, Danes, and indeed of all the nations of Europe, in the middle ages. This is evident from their laws, and from every passage in their history, in which there is the least allusion to music. By the laws of Wales, a harp was one of the three things that were necessary to constitute a gentleman, *i. e.* a freeman; and none could pretend to that character who had not one of these favourite instruments, or could not play upon it\*. By the same laws, to prevent slaves from pretending to be gentlemen, it was expressly forbidden to teach, or to permit them to play upon the harp; and none but the king, the king's musicians, and gentlemen, were allowed to have harps in their possession†. A gentleman's harp was not liable to be seized for debt; because the want of it would have degraded him from his rank, and reduced him to a slave. The harp was in no less estimation and universal use among the Saxons, Danes, and all the other northern nations, by whom it is supposed to have been invented‡. Those who played upon this instrument were declared gentlemen by law; their

The harp  
the most  
admired  
musical in-  
strument.

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 301.

† *Id.* p. 415.

‡ *Hickesii Gram. Franko. Theotisca*, p. 96.

persons were esteemed inviolable, and secured from injuries by very severe penalties; they were readily admitted into the highest company, and treated with distinguished marks of respect wherever they appeared \*.

Other musical instruments.

Though the harp was the most common, it was far from being the only musical instrument that was used by the Saxons, Danes, Welsh, and other inhabitants of this island, in this period. They had indeed a great variety, both of wind and stringed instruments, which are occasionally mentioned by the writers of those times, some of which are now unknown. “The instruments of practical music,” says Bede, in his treatise on that subject, “are either natural or artificial. The natural instruments are the lungs, the throat, the tongue, the palate, &c.; the artificial instruments are the organ, the violin, the harp, the atola, the psaltry, &c. &c. †.” The trumpet, the tabor, the pipe, the flute, &c. are mentioned by the same venerable author in other parts of that treatise; and we meet with the lute, the cymbal, the citola, the lyre, the sistrum, the campanula, and several others, in the other writers of the middle ages ‡. It may be questioned, whether the organ mentioned by Bede was an instrument of the same kind with that which bears this name in modern times. Some are of opinion, that it was not, but rather

\* Leges Angl. apud Lindenbrog. p. 485.

† Bedæ Opera, Coloniae, 1612. p. 353.

‡ Du Cange Gloss. in voc.



an instrument composed of several reeds, and blown with the mouth \*. But as there is sufficient evidence, that organs blown with bellows, and of the same construction with ours, were known in the East in the fourth century, it is not improbable that they had made their way into Britain about the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth age, when Bede flourished †. That organs were erected and used in some of the principal churches in England, in this period, we have the fullest evidence. The famous St Dunstan made a present of an organ with brass pipes, to the abbey-church of Malmsbury, from his great veneration for the memory of St Aldhelm, the founder of that church; and to this organ a plate of brass was affixed, on which the following distich was engraved :—

Organa do Sancto Præsul Dunstanus Aldelmo,  
Perdat hic eternum qui vult hinc tollere regnum ‡.

The famous Ailwyn, Alderman of all England, and founder of Ramsay abbey, expended no less than thirty pounds of Saxon money, equal in quantity of silver to ninety, and in efficacy to nine hundred pounds of our money, in building an organ, with brass pipes, in the church of that abbey ||. The people of North Wales had a musical instrument, called in their language, a *crawd*, and, in the barbarous Latin of those times, *crotta*, which had six strings of catgut, and very

\* Murat. Antiq. t. 2. p. 357.

‡ W. Malms. de Pontificibus, l. 5.

† Id. ibid. p. 358.

|| Histor. Ramsiens. c. 51.

much resembled the modern violin \*. It was usual on solemn occasions for a great number of singers, harpers, and players on other instruments, to sing and play in concert; and from the above enumeration, which is far from being perfect, we may perceive that they had a sufficient number of instruments to make abundance of noise.

Astonishing effects of music.

The most astonishing effects are ascribed to the music, as well as to the poetry, of the present period; and these effects were probably owing to the natural and happy union of both those pleasing arts, rather than to the intrinsic excellence of either of them. Olaus Magnus relates the following story as an example of the surprising power of poetry and music: “ A certain famous scald and harper in the court of King Eric the Good, used to boast, that he could raise and inflame the passions of the human heart to any degree he pleased. The King, partly by promises, and partly by threats, prevailed upon the artist, much against his inclination, to make the experiment on him and his courtiers. The scald begun by singing such mournful strains, and playing in such plaintive tones, that the whole company were overwhelmed with sorrow, and melted into tears: by and by he sung and played such joyous and exhilarating airs, that they forgot their sorrows, and began to laugh,

\* Dissertatio de Bardis, p. 80.

“ and dance, and shout, and give every demon-  
“ stration of the most unbounded mirth : at last  
“ changing his subject and his tune, he poured  
“ forth such loud, fierce, and angry sounds,  
“ that they were seized with the most frantic  
“ rage, and would have fallen by mutual wounds,  
“ if the guards, at a signal given, had not rush-  
“ ed in and bound them ; but, unhappily, be-  
“ fore the King was overpowered, he killed no  
“ fewer than four of those who endeavoured to  
“ apprehend him \*.” Venerable Bede, who was  
a philosopher, as well as a poet and musician,  
speaks of the effects of music in his time, in  
more temperate strains, and yet represents them  
as considerable. “ Great is the utility of mu-  
“ sic, and its effects are admirable. It is in-  
“ deed of all the arts the most laudable, plea-  
“ sant, joyous, and amiable ; and renders men  
“ brave, liberal, courteous, and agreeable, by  
“ its great power over their passions and affec-  
“ tions. How much, for example, doth mar-  
“ tial music rouse the courage of combatants ?  
“ and is it not observed, that the louder and  
“ more terrible the clangor is, the more fiercely  
“ doth the battle rage ? Is it not music that  
“ purifies and delights the hearts of men, that  
“ dispels their sorrows, alleviates their cares,  
“ improves their joys, and revives them after  
“ their fatigues ? Nay, is it not music that  
“ cures the headach, and some other diseases,

\* Hist. Olai Magni, p. 586.

“ and promotes the health of the body, as well  
“ as the happiness of the mind \*?” Can we reasonably suppose, that the music of those times was contemptible, when so wise and good a man as Bede, who was so well acquainted with it, ascribes to it such effects?

Church-  
music.

After the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, they became acquainted with a new kind of music, to which they had formerly been strangers. This was church-music; which, from a principle of piety, as well as from their natural taste for the tuneful arts, they cultivated with uncommon ardour. To instruct them in that music, which was very different from their own, they procured the ablest masters from Rome, and sent some of their most ingenious youth to that city for instruction. One of the most celebrated of these foreign teachers of church-music was John, the arch-chantor of St Peter's at Rome, and abbot of St Martin's in that city; who, at the request of the famous Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremouth, was sent over by Pope Agatha, A.D. 678, to teach the monks of Weremouth, and the other English monks, the art of singing the public services after the Roman manner. “ This abbot John,” says Bede, who was then a young scholar in the monastery of Weremouth, “ taught all the monks of our “ monastery the art of singing; and all the “ monks in the other monasteries of Northum-

\* Opera Bedæ, t. 1. p. 353.

“berland, who had a taste for music, came  
“thither, and put themselves under his care.  
“Besides this, he taught in many other places,  
“where he was invited, and also left directions  
“in writing for singing the service of the whole  
“year, which are still preserved in our monas-  
“tery, and of which many copies are publish-  
“ed\*.” Church-music was one of the chief  
branches of learning taught in the college of  
Canterbury, and professors of this music were  
sent from thence into all other parts of Eng-  
land †. But those who were desirous of attain-  
ing to the highest degree of excellence in this  
kind of music, which was then one of the most  
admired accomplishments of the clergy, and the  
most certain means of preferment in the church,  
travelled to Rome for their improvement in it,  
where it was taught in the most perfect man-  
ner ‡.

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 18.

† Id. l. 5. c. 20.

‡ Id. ibid.



THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

---

BOOK II.

CHAP. VI.

THE HISTORY OF COMMERCE, COIN, AND SHIPPING IN  
GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE ARRIVAL OF THE SAX-  
ONS, A. D. 499. TO THE LANDING OF WILLIAM DUKE  
OF NORMANDY, A. D. 1066.

COMMERCE is no less necessary to the prosper-  
ity of particular states and kingdoms, and of the  
world in general, than the circulation of the blood  
to the health of the human body. As soon as  
any society is formed, in any country, under any  
form of government, commerce begins its opera-  
tions, and circulates the natural productions of  
the earth,—the various animals that are used  
for labour, food, or clothing,—together with all  
those commodities that are the effects of human  
art and industry, among the members of that  
society, for the good of the whole, and of every

Importance  
of internal  
commerce.

individual. This may be called internal commerce, because its effects and operations are confined within the limits of one particular state and country. This internal commerce is always the first, and for some time the only commerce, that is carried on in the infancy of states and kingdoms. It is also the most constant and permanent, and, like the circulation of the blood, is never interrupted a single moment while the society subsists. The home-trade, or internal commerce of a kingdom, therefore, is an object of great importance to its prosperity, and merits the attention of the historian in every period.

And of foreign trade.

Though some countries are blessed with a more fertile soil and friendly climate, and abound more with the necessities and comforts of life, than others, it may be affirmed with truth, that there is hardly any habitable country that hath not a redundancy of some useful commodities, and a want or scarcity of others. This makes it natural for the inhabitants of every country to desire to dispose of their superfluities to procure a supply of their necessities; which can only be accomplished by opening a commercial intercourse with the inhabitants of other countries, who want what they can spare, and can spare what they want. These mutual necessities of the inhabitants of different countries, states, and kingdoms, by degrees overcome their mutual dislikes and jealousies, and give rise to an interchange of commodities, which may be called *foreign commerce*. This foreign commerce, in any country,



is at first but small, extending only to contiguous states and kingdoms; but when it prospers, and is well conducted, it is gradually more and more enlarged, until it penetrates into the most distant regions, and brings home the productions of every climate. To attend, therefore, to the gradual increase, and various revolutions of the foreign trade of a commercial country, in the several periods of its history, is an object equally curious and important.

It hath been made appear, in the sixth chapter of the first book of this work, that both the internal and foreign commerce of provincial Britain were in a very flourishing condition in the Roman times \*. The natural productions and manufactures of each of the Roman provinces in this island had a free circulation into the other provinces, by means of coasting vessels, navigable rivers, and excellent highways. The superfluous corn, cattle, minerals, and manufactures, of all these provinces, were exported into all parts of the Roman empire, where they were wanted, and valuable returns brought home, either in goods or cash. It hath also been observed, that both the internal and foreign trade of provincial Britain began to decline very sensibly before the end of the preceding period, the former being much interrupted by the depredations of the Scots and Picts, and the latter by the piracies of the Franks and Saxons †. But by the final de-

Recapitulation of the state of commerce in the former period.

\* See book I. c. 6.

† Id. *ibid.*

parture of the Romans out of this island, its internal commerce was reduced to the lowest ebb, and its foreign trade almost quite annihilated \*. Nor did either of these revive, in any remarkable degree, till after the establishment of the Saxon heptarchy. For in that deplorable interval between the arrival of the Saxons and their establishment, war was almost the only trade of all the British nations. But as soon as the rage of those long and bloody wars between the Britons and Saxons began to abate, by the retreat of the former into Wales and Cornwall, and the establishment of the latter in that part of Britain which was soon after called *England*, all those nations began to pay greater attention to the arts of peace, and particularly to trade and commerce. From this æra, therefore, in the course of the sixth century, we shall begin the annals of commerce in the present period.

Anglo-Saxons neglected maritime affairs.

There are few examples in history of so sudden a change in the pursuits and employments of any people, as in those of the Anglo-Saxons, after their arrival in this island. Before that time, the sea was their favourite element, and navigation the art in which they most delighted and excelled. “The Saxons,” says an author of the fifth century, “are not only well acquainted, “but perfectly familiar, with the arts of navigation, and all the dangers of the sea †.” But

\* See book I. c. 6.

† Sidon. Apollin. l. 3. epist. 6.

as soon as they began to form settlements in the pleasant and fertile plains of Britain, they abandoned the sea, and neglected maritime affairs for several centuries. This was partly owing to the long and obstinate resistance they met with from the Britons, which obliged them to employ all their forces at land, and to neglect the sea; and partly to the fertility of their new settlements; which, furnishing them with all the necessities and conveniences of life of which they had any ideas, they remained contented at home, and no longer infested the narrow seas with their piratical expeditions. The fact, however, is undeniable, that the Anglo-Saxons, during their struggle with the Britons, and for near two centuries after, had very few ships, and almost totally neglected maritime affairs. After their several armies landed in this island, we hear no more of their fleets, which they either destroyed or suffered to rot in their harbours. In this period, therefore, and indeed during the whole continuance of the heptarchy, the Anglo-Saxons had very little commercial intercourse with any of the countries on the continent; and that little was chiefly carried on by foreigners. Venerable Bede, who is our surest guide in this dark interval, acquaints us, “ That the city of London, the capital of “ the little kingdom of Essex, was a famous “ emporium (probably the only one then in “ Britain), frequented by merchants of several “ nations, who came to it both by sea and land

“ on account of trade \*.” This seems to intimate, that London was the great centre of the British commerce in those times ; to which the Anglo-Saxon merchants, from the different nations of the heptarchy, brought their goods by land, and there met with foreign merchants, who came thither by sea to purchase these goods either with money, or with other goods, which they had brought from the continent. In this manner, the greatest part of the little trade between England and the continent was carried on till about the middle of the eighth century.

Foreign  
trade re-  
vived by  
Offa King  
of Mercia.

Offa King of Mercia, who mounted that throne A. D. 755, seems to have been the first of our Anglo-Saxon princes who gave any great attention to trade and maritime affairs. This great prince encouraged his subjects to fit out ships, and carry their goods to the continent in English bottoms, with a view to raise a naval power for the protection of his dominions. The other petty princes of the heptarchy, dreading the power and ambition of Offa, applied to Charlemagne, the greatest monarch who had reigned in Europe since the fall of the Roman empire, for his protection against their too powerful neighbour, of whom they made very bitter complaints. This occasioned a violent misunderstanding between these two great princes, and very much interrupted the trade of England in its infancy. Charlemagne treated the English

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 3.

merchants, subjects of the king of Mercia, with great severity, and even denied them admission into his ports; which provoked Offa, who was a prince of a high spirit, to treat the Emperor's subjects in the same manner in England. "I know not," says the famous Alcuinus, in one of his letters, "what will become of us in this country, for an unhappy contention, fomented by the malice of the devil, hath lately arisen between Charlemagne and King Offa, and hath proceeded so far, that a stop is put to all commerce between their dominions. There is a report, that I am to be sent abroad to negotiate a peace\*." This report proved true. Alcuinus was sent abroad, and conducted his negotiation with so much address, that he not only concluded a commercial treaty between Offa and Charlemagne, but became one of the greatest favourites of that mighty monarch.

There is an article in this ancient commercial treaty, which informs us of a very singular kind of smuggling that was carried on by the English merchants of those times. The Emperor Charlemagne had imposed certain customs or duties on all kinds of merchandise imported into his dominions, and appointed officers in all his ports for collecting these customs. Some English merchants, in order to elude the payment of these duties, put on the habits of pilgrims, and pretended that they were travelling to Rome,

Singular  
kind of  
smuggling.

\* W. Malms. l. 1. c. 4. p. 17.

or some other place, on a religious account, and that the bales which they carried with them contained nothing but provisions and necessaries for their journey, which were exempted from paying any duty. But the collectors of the customs (a suspicious unbelieving kind of men in all ages) often searched the parcels of these pretended palmers; and, finding them to contain merchant-goods, either seized them, or imposed a heavy fine upon their owners, which occasioned loud complaints, and was one of the subjects of controversy between the two princes; Offa insisting that the baggage of all his subjects, who travelled through the Emperor's dominions on pilgrimages, should be allowed to pass unsearched. Alcuinus was not able to carry this point; which, to say the truth, was not very reasonable: but the following article was inserted in the treaty, which sufficiently secured all real pilgrims from injury: “ All strangers who pass  
“ through our dominions to visit the thresholds  
“ of the blessed apostles, for the love of God and  
“ the salvation of their souls, shall be allowed  
“ to pass without paying any toll or duty; but  
“ such as only put on the habit of pilgrims, and  
“ under that pursue their traffic and merchandise, must pay the legal duties at the appointed places. It is also our will, that all merchants shall enjoy the most perfect security for  
“ their persons and effects under our protection,  
“ and according to our command; and if any of  
“ them are oppressed or injured, let them appeal

“ to us or our judges, and they shall obtain the  
 “ most ample satisfaction \*.” {Such seems to  
 have been the state of the little trade between  
 England and the continent in the times of the  
 heptarchy ; carried on chiefly by foreigners,  
 and a few English subjects, who were rather  
 pedlars than merchants, and not very famous  
 either for their wealth or honesty. So small  
 were the beginnings of the trade of England,  
 which has since arisen to so great a height !

The animosities that subsisted between the  
 Anglo-Saxons and Britons, during their long  
 and bloody wars, were too violent to admit of  
 any trade, or the exchange of any thing but  
 blows and injuries. Even after these wars had  
 subsided, by the settlement of the former in  
 England, and the retreat of the latter into  
 Wales, the intercourse between them was rather  
 hostile and predatory than commercial ; for the  
 Britons still considering themselves as the right-  
 ful owners of the fine countries from which they  
 had been expelled, made frequent inroads into  
 the English territories, and seized every thing  
 they could lay their hands upon as their own  
 property. These predatory expeditions were  
 so far from being considered by the Britons as  
 having any thing shameful or unlawful in them,  
 that they were esteemed the most sacred duties,  
 and most honourable exploits, of their greatest  
 men ; for which they were highly celebrated

No com-  
 mercial in-  
 tercourse  
 between  
 the Anglo-  
 Saxons and  
 Welsh.

\* W. Malms. l. 1. c. 4. p. 17.

by their bards who attended them\*. “The royal bard shall attend the king’s domestics when they go out to plunder the English, and shall sing and play before them for their encouragement. If they meet with resistance, and a battle ensue, he shall sing the song called the *Old British monarchy*.” Many laws were made for regulating the division of the booty taken in these expeditions, between the king, the great officers of his court, and all others concerned†. It is in vain to look for the peaceful and equitable transactions of commerce between nations who lived on this unfriendly footing; and on this footing the inhabitants of England and Wales lived till long after the conclusion of the heptarchy. The injuries which the unhappy Britons had sustained were too great to be soon forgotten by their posterity.

Commerce  
between  
the differ-  
ent states  
of the hep-  
tarchy.

Though the Anglo-Saxons were divided into several petty states and kingdoms in the times of the heptarchy, yet as they all spoke the same language, and were in reality the same people, we have no reason to doubt that the inhabitants of different states traded sometimes with each other, when these states were not in open war. The people of some of these states were addicted to agriculture, and those of others to pasturage, which made a commercial intercourse between them for their mutual benefit. But notwithstanding this, it cannot be denied, that the

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 36.

† *Id. ibid.*



political divisions of the Anglo-Saxons into so many governments, must have been a great interruption to their internal commerce, by their national jealousies and frequent wars. It is something more than an illustration of this, that though the people of England and Scotland were as near, and almost as like to each other, before they were united into one kingdom, as they have been since, yet their commercial dealings were not near so great.

The internal as well as the foreign commerce of the Anglo-Saxons in the times of the heptarchy was very trifling, and lay under manifold restraints. How great a restraint, for example, must the following law have been, that was made by Lothere King of Kent, who flourished about the middle of the seventh century:—" If any of the people of Kent buy any thing in the city of London, he must have two or three honest men, or the king's portreeve (who was the chief magistrate of the city), present at the bargain\*." By the same Saxon laws, no man was allowed to buy any thing above the value of twenty pence, except within a town, and in the presence of the chief magistrate, and other witnesses†. The same restraints were laid upon bartering one commodity for another: " Let none exchange one thing for another, except in the presence of the sheriff, the mass-priest, the lord of the manor, or some other

Restraints  
on trade.

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 9.

† Id. ibid.

“ person of undoubted veracity. If they do  
“ otherwise, they shall pay a fine of thirty shil-  
“ lings, besides forfeiting the goods so exchanged  
” to the lord of the manor \*.” The design of  
these and several other troublesome regulations  
was, to ascertain the terms of all bargains, at a  
time when very few could write, that, if any  
dispute arose, there might be sufficient evidence  
to direct the judges in their determinations;—  
and also to prevent impositions of all kinds, and  
the sale of faulty and of stolen goods; or in case  
of such being sold, that the innocent party might  
be indemnified and the guilty punished. These  
regulations, however, must have been a great  
interruption to all commercial dealings; and  
clearly shew, that internal, as well as foreign  
trade, was then in a very low state; and the  
members of society had little knowledge of busi-  
ness, or confidence in each other’s honesty. By  
the laws of Wales, another precaution was added,  
to prevent the possibility of imposition, by fixing  
a certain legal price upon every commodity that  
could be the subject of commerce; and this is  
done in these laws, with a fullness of enumera-  
tion, in a degree of minuteness, that is truly  
curious and surprising †. For example, there is  
in these laws a whole section, and that none of  
the shortest, settling the prices of cats, from the  
moment of their birth through all the stages of

\* Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 9.

† *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 3.

life, according to their various properties\*. It is true, these laws had another view besides regulating the prices of these commodities in sales; which was, to regulate the damages that were to be paid for them in case of their destruction. It must also have been a discouragement to internal commerce, that in those times a certain proportion of the price of all commodities bought and sold in each kingdom was payable to the king, when it was above twenty pence; and this was another reason why their laws required, that all bargains for things above that value, should be made within the gates of the towns, and in the presence of the sheriff, or portreeve, who collected these duties. This custom, like many others, the Anglo-Saxons adopted from the Romans; and it was continued from the beginning to the end of this period; of which it will be sufficient to give one example. From Domesday-book it appears, that a certain proportion of the price of every thing bought and sold within the borough of Lewes in Sussex was to be paid to the portreeve, the one half by the buyer, and the other by the seller; and particularly that the portreeve was to receive fourpence for every man that was sold within that borough †.

As we have mentioned several laws and customs in this period, which had a tendency to

Institution  
of fairs and  
markets.

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 247, 248.

† *Scriptores Saxon.* a T. Gale edit. t. 1. p. 762.

cramp and restrain internal commerce, it is but just to take some notice of such as were calculated to promote it. Of this kind the institution of markets and fairs at certain stated times and places was certainly one of the most effectual, as it brought buyers and sellers, and things to be bought and sold, together. This institution was not the invention of the Anglo-Saxons, but had been long established in all the provinces of the Roman empire, and was wisely continued by them, and by all the other barbarous nations who took possession of those provinces on the fall of that empire. All those nations, however, regulated their fairs and markets according to their own customs and ideas. The appointment of the times and places of those mercantile meetings was one of the royal prerogatives; and they were commonly appointed when and where there was a concourse of people on some other account. This is the reason that the weekly markets in the former part of this period were commonly at churches (which were then chiefly in towns), and on Sundays, that the people might have an opportunity of procuring necessaries for the purposes of religion; and possibly in hopes that the churches would be better frequented on that account. But it was found that this unnatural mixture of secular and religious affairs was attended with manifold inconveniences, and very hurtful to the interests of religion; and therefore many laws were made against holding

markets on Sundays \*. It seems, however, to have been very difficult to change this custom, which had been long established, and was agreeable to many; for these laws were often repeated, and enforced by severe fines, besides the forfeiture of all the goods exposed to sale. At length, though these weekly markets were still kept near churches, the day was changed from Sunday to Saturday, that those who came from a distance might have an opportunity of attending divine service on the day after, if they pleased. This was a consideration of importance, when churches, being few, were at a great distance from each other. Besides these weekly markets, there were greater commercial meetings held at certain places, on fixed days of the year; which being well known, were much frequented. These too had a very intimate connection with religion, being always held near some cathedral church or monastery, on the anniversary of the dedication of the church, or on the festival of the saint to whom it was dedicated; which happened in this manner. When bishops and abbots observed that great multitudes of people came from all places to celebrate the festivals of their patron saints, they applied to the crown for charters to hold fairs at those times, for the accommodation of strangers, and with a view to increase their own revenues by the tolls which their charters authorised them to levy at those fairs †. This

\* Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 377. 404. 450. 500. 518, &c.

† Murator. Antiq. t. 2. Dissertat. 30. p. 862.

contributed also to increase the crowds at these festivals, some attending them with religious, and others with commercial views; and the greater these crowds were, it was thought the more honourable for the saint, and was certainly the more profitable for the clergy. Many precautions were taken to preserve good order, and prevent theft and cheating, in these ecclesiastical fairs, some of them not a little singular. For example, when a fair was held within the precincts of a cathedral or monastery, it was not uncommon to oblige every man to take an oath at the gate before he was admitted, that he would neither lie, nor steal, nor cheat, while he continued in the fair\*; an oath which we may presume was not always strictly kept! These customs, so different from our own, may appear to us ridiculous; but they were very artful contrivances of the clergy of those times, for raising the reputation and increasing the revenues of their respective churches; and also profitable to the public, by promoting commerce. Many of these ecclesiastical fairs (as they may not improperly be called) are still kept in all Popish countries; and many of our own are still held on the same saint's days to whose honour they were originally instituted.

Establishment of the English monarchy favourable to trade.

The establishment of the English monarchy, by the reduction of all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, one after another, under the domi-

\* Murator. Antiq. t. 2. Dissertat. 30. p. 882.

nion of one sovereign, was an event highly favourable both to the internal and foreign trade of England. It was favourable to internal trade, by putting a period to those internal wars which almost constantly raged between the petty states of the heptarchy, and by rendering the communication between the several parts of England more secure and free. It was favourable to foreign commerce, by making the English monarchy a greater object to foreign merchants, and the English monarchs of greater consideration in foreign countries. Not long after the establishment of the monarchy, alliances and intermarriages took place between the royal families on the continent and the royal family of England; which opened a more free communication between this kingdom and the dominions of foreign princes. Edward the Elder, who was one of the first English monarchs, had four daughters married to the four greatest princes then in Europe; and on occasion of these marriages, many curious things were brought into England, where they had never before been seen, and other things were sent out in return; which gave rise to commercial intercourse\*.

The establishment of the English monarchy would have been still more beneficial to trade, if the advantages of it had not been balanced by the piracies of the Danes, and their descents upon the coasts of England, which began about

Invasions  
of the  
Danes  
hurtful to  
trade.

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6.

the same time. These ferocious freebooters, who had never been heard of in England till near the end of the eighth century, became so formidable in the ninth, that they covered the narrow seas with their piratical fleets, and kept all the coasts in continual alarms with their invasions, which were as sudden as they were destructive. In this period, therefore, when the Danish and Norwegian fleets rode triumphant at sea, and seized every merchant-ship that fell in their way, and when their crews landed when and where they pleased, and plundered the coasts and sea-ports, there could be little foreign trade in England. This was the state of things from A. D. 787, when the first fleet of Danish pirates plundered the coasts of England, to A. D. 875, when Alfred the Great obtained the first naval victory over those destructive rovers\*. In this unhappy interval, the fatal consequences of the long and imprudent neglect of maritime affairs were severely felt by the English; who thereby not only lost all the advantages of foreign trade, but suffered innumerable insults and calamities from their cruel invaders. Sometimes, indeed, they defeated the Danes on shore, and obliged them to fly to their ships; but during that space of eighty-eight years, they were never able to look them in the face at sea; which rendered their victories by land of little value. For whenever the Danes met with a vigorous resistance in one

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 64. 83.



place, they retired to their ships, and flew like lightning to another, where the people were not so well prepared for their reception, and there took ample revenge for their former repulse.

There can be no question, that the first Eng-  
lish monarchs, Egbert, Ethelwulph, and his three  
eldest sons, who were all cruelly harassed by the  
continual invasions of the Danes, were very sen-  
sible of the disadvantages they laboured under,  
for want of a sufficient fleet to meet their ene-  
mies at sea, and prevent their landing; and that  
they were earnestly desirous of supplying that  
defect. But there is nothing in the world more  
difficult, than to restore a naval power when it  
is fallen into decay, in a country where there is  
little foreign trade to furnish ships, and to be a  
nursery for seamen, and in the face of enemies  
who are masters of the sea. To an ordinary ge-  
nius, this must appear impracticable. What  
admiration, then, is justly due to that extraor-  
dinary prince, who not only attempted, but ac-  
complished, that difficult undertaking; who rais-  
ed a mighty naval power almost out of nothing,  
revived foreign trade, and wrested the dominion  
of the seas out of the hands of the insulting  
Danes? This was the great Alfred, who pre-  
sents himself in so many amiable points of view,  
to one who studies the Anglo-Saxon history,  
that it is impossible not to contract the fondest  
and most enthusiastic admiration of his charac-  
ter. It is much to be lamented, that we have  
such imperfect accounts of the means by which

Naval power  
and foreign  
trade of  
England re-  
stored by  
Alfred the  
Great.

this great prince accomplished the many wonders of his reign, and particularly of the methods by which he restored the naval power and foreign trade of England, when they were both annihilated. The few historians of those times were wretched monks, who knew little of these matters, and thought it sufficient to register in their meagre chronicles, that such and such things were done, without acquainting us with the means by which they were accomplished. We must try, however, to make the best of the few imperfect hints which they have left us, and endeavour to set this important part of the naval and commercial history of England in as clear a light as possible.

Naval history of Alfred.

Nothing can more fully demonstrate the low state of the shipping and trade of England at the accession of Alfred to the crown, than the feebleness of the first fleet with which he encountered his enemies at sea. After four years preparation, he got together five or six small vessels, with which he put to sea in person, A. D. 875; and meeting with six sail of Danish pirates, he boldly attacked them, took one, and put the rest to flight\*: a victory which, though small in itself, probably gave him no little joy, as it was gained on an element to which the Anglo-Saxons had long been strangers. His misfortunes at land, which threatened the total ruin of himself and kingdom, obliged him to suspend

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 83.

the prosecution of his design of raising a naval power for some time. But no sooner had he retrieved his affairs, by the great victory which he obtained over the Danes at Eddington, A. D. 878, than he resumed his former scheme, and pursued it with redoubled ardour: and the means he employed to accomplish it were equally humane and wise. Instead of satisfying his revenge, by putting the remains of the Danish army to the sword when they were in his power, he granted them an honourable capitulation, persuaded their leaders to become Christians, assigned them lands in East-Anglia and Northumberland, and made it their interest to defend that country which they came to plunder\*. With the assistance of these Danes, who had many ships, and were excellent sailors, he fitted out a powerful fleet, which Asserius tells us he manned with pirates, which was the name then commonly given to the Danes by all the other nations of Europe; and with this fleet he fought many battles against other Danish fleets, with various success†. There can be no doubt that this wise prince put many of his own natural subjects on board that fleet, both to learn the arts of navigating and fighting ships, and to secure the fidelity of the Danes, of which he had good reason to be suspicious. Still further to increase the number of his seamen, he invited all foreigners, particularly the people of Old Saxony

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 4.

† Asser. p. 9.

and Friesland, to enter into his service, and gave them every possible encouragement \*. As he well knew that a flourishing foreign trade was the best nursery for seamen, and of great advantage to the kingdom, he excited his subjects to embark in it by various means, as particularly by lending them money and ships, and by others that will be hereafter mentioned †. By these, and probably by other methods which have not come to our knowledge, Alfred raised so great a naval power in a few years, that he was able to secure the coasts of his kingdom, and protect the trade of his subjects.

Voyages for  
making dis-  
coveries.

In the midst of all these, and many other cares, Alfred encouraged foreigners that were in his service, and some of his own subjects, to undertake voyages for making discoveries, and opening new sources of trade, both towards the north and south ; of which it will be proper to give some account. There is still extant a very curious relation of one of these voyages undertaken by one Ochter, a Norwegian. This relation was given by the adventurer himself at his return, and written down from his mouth by King Alfred, with his own hand. The style of this precious fragment of antiquity is remarkably simple, and it seems to have been designed only as a memorandum for the king's own private use. This simplicity of style is imitated in the following

\* Asser. p. 13.

† Anderson's History of Commerce, t. 1. p. 44.

translation, from the original Saxon, of that part of it which it is thought necessary to lay before the reader.

“ Ochter informed his lord, Alfred the King, <sup>Ochter's</sup>  
“ that his habitation was to the north of all the <sup>voyage.</sup>  
“ other Normans, in that country which is  
“ washed on the north by the western ocean.  
“ He said, that country stretched very far to-  
“ wards the north, and was quite destitute of  
“ inhabitants, except a few Finniands, who lived  
“ in the winter by hunting, and in the summer  
“ by fishing. He added, that he had conceived  
“ a strong desire to examine how far that coun-  
“ try extended towards the north, and whether  
“ any people resided beyond that desert ; and  
“ with these views had sailed directly northward,  
“ keeping the desert land on his right hand, and  
“ the open sea on the left, for three days, when  
“ he was as far north as the whale-fishers used to  
“ go. After that he sailed other three days in  
“ the same course, when he found the land  
“ make a turn towards the east ; but whether  
“ this was a great bay or not he could not cer-  
“ tainly tell ; this he knew, that he waited there  
“ some time for a north-west wind ; by which  
“ he sailed eastward four days near the shore.  
“ Here again he waited for a north wind, be-  
“ cause the land turned directly southward, or  
“ the sea run into the land that way, he knew  
“ not which ; but he sailed southward as far as  
“ he could sail in five days close by the coast,  
“ when he came to the mouth of a great river,

“ which run up far into the land. In this place  
“ he put an end to his voyage, not daring to  
“ sail up that river, because the country was well  
“ inhabited on one side of it. This, he said,  
“ was the only well-peopled country he had met  
“ with after he had left his own home. For  
“ during the whole voyage, the land on his  
“ right hand was all a desert, having in it only  
“ a few wandering fishers, fowlers, and hunters,  
“ who were all Finniains; on his left hand all  
“ was open sea.

Continued. “ He said further, That the Bearms told him,  
“ their country was well inhabited; but he  
“ durst not go ashore. The land of the Tir-  
“ finniains was almost a desert, being inhabited  
“ only by a few fishers, hawkers, and hunters.  
“ The Bearms, he said, told him many things  
“ both about their own country and the neigh-  
“ bouring countries; but whether these things  
“ were true or not, he could not tell, because  
“ he had not seen them himself. He thought  
“ the Finniains and the Bearms spoke nearly the  
“ same language.

Continued. “ He said he visited these parts also with a  
“ view of catching horse-whales, which had  
“ bones of very great value for their teeth; of  
“ which he brought some to the King; that their  
“ skins were good for making ropes for ships.  
“ These whales are much less than other whales,  
“ being only five ells long. The best whales  
“ were catched in his own country, of which  
“ some were forty-eight, some fifty yards long.

“ He said, that he was one of six who had killed  
 “ sixty in two days.

“ Ochter was a man rich in those things which Ochter's  
riches.  
 “ were there esteemed riches, viz. wild animals.  
 “ He had, when he came to the King, six hun-  
 “ dred rein-deer, all unbought. Among these  
 “ were six of a kind which the Finnians value  
 “ very highly, because with them they catch  
 “ wild deer. He was one of the greatest men  
 “ in that land, and yet he had only twenty  
 “ cows, twenty sheep, and twenty swine. The  
 “ little land that he ploughed, he ploughed with  
 “ horses. His chief revenues consisted in the  
 “ tributes which the Finnians or Laplanders  
 “ paid him ; which were composed of deer-skins,  
 “ and birds feathers, and the bones of whales,  
 “ and ship ropes made of whales skins and seals  
 “ skins. Every man pays according to his cir-  
 “ cumstances ; the richest commonly paying fif-  
 “ teen martins skins, five of rein deers, one of  
 “ bears, ten bushels of feathers, one kirtle of  
 “ bears skins or otters skins, two ship-ropes,  
 “ each sixty yards long, the one made of whales  
 “ skins, and the other of seals skins\*.”

The rest of this fragment contains a descrip- Observa-  
tions on  
Ochter's  
voyage.  
 tion of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, which  
 this adventurous navigator had visited at the de-  
 sire of King Alfred ; but must be omitted for the  
 sake of brevity. The river where Ochter ter-  
 minated his voyage, and from whence he re-

\* Vita Ælfredi Magni, Append. vi. p. 205.

turned, must have been the Dwina, on the banks of which Archangel was long after built. The Bearms, with whom Ochter conversed, were the inhabitants of the country anciently called *Bearmland*, thought by some to be the country now called *Melepadia*, *Ingermania*, &c. but more probably the country on the eastern banks of the Dwina. How many reflections will this short fragment suggest to every intelligent reader! and how much must he admire the genius of this great prince, who gained a more perfect knowledge of those northern seas and lands, in that early period, when the art of navigation was so imperfect, than any other Englishman acquired for more than six hundred and fifty years after his death! For Captain Richard Chancellor was the first European navigator who discovered the White Sea and the River Dwina, A. D. 1553, from the age of King Alfred\*. Ochter, who performed this dangerous voyage, was probably one of those Norwegian princes who were expelled their country about A. D. 870, by that great northern conqueror Harold Harfager, who reduced all Norway under his obedience.

Wulfstan's  
voyage.

There is also extant a short journal of another voyage, written by King Alfred from the mouth of one Wulfstan, an Anglo-Saxon, whom he had sent to explore the coasts of the Baltic, and the several countries that are washed by that sea; of which it may be proper to translate a part.

\* Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. 1. p. 386.



“ Wulfstan said, that he sailed from Haethby,  
“ (now Sleswic), and in five days and five nights  
“ continual sailing, arrived at Truso. Weonad-  
“ land was on his right hand; on his left was  
“ Langaland, Zealand, Falster, and Sconen.  
“ All these countries belong to Denmark. Af-  
“ terwards Burgendaland (perhaps Bornholm)  
“ was on the left hand, which hath a king of  
“ its own. After Burgendaland, was the coun-  
“ try which is called *Blekinga*, and Meora, (per-  
“ haps Morby), and Ocland, and Gothland, on  
“ the left hand, which belong to the Sweons  
“ (Swedes); and Weonadland (so he calls the  
“ whole coast of Germany washed by the Bal-  
“ tic) was always on the right hand to the  
“ mouth of the river Wisle (the Vistula). The  
“ Wisle is a very great river, on which are Wit-  
“ land and Weonadland. Witland belongeth  
“ to the Esteons. The Wisle hath its source  
“ in Weonadland, and flows into the lake Est-  
“ mere, which is fifteen miles broad. Then  
“ cometh the Ilfing from the east into Estmere,  
“ on the bank of which Truso standeth. Both  
“ the Ilfing and the Wisle flow into the lake  
“ Estmere, the former from the east out of  
“ Eastlandia, the latter from the west out of  
“ Weonadland. Then the Ilfing loseth its name,  
“ and falleth out of the lake into the sea, by a  
“ north-west course, at a place called *Wislemouth*.  
“ The Eastland is very extensive, and hath many  
“ towns, and in every town a king. It abounds  
“ in honey and fish. The kings and rich men

"drink mares milk," &c. The remainder of this fragment contains a very curious account of the manners and customs of the people of East-land, (now Poland), and in particular of the ceremonies at their funerals, which are singular enough; but too long, and too foreign to our present subject, to be here inserted \*.

Designs of  
Alfred un-  
known.

It is impossible to discover, at this distance of time, whether Alfred's views in being at so much pains to gain a perfect knowledge of the seas and coasts of Scandinavia, were purely commercial; or whether he had not formed in his own mind the design of a military expedition into those countries, to retaliate on their restless inhabitants some of the injuries which they had so long inflicted on the English, and the other nations of Europe, almost with impunity. It would require a genius equal to Alfred's to conceive the great designs which he had formed, and of which his early death prevented the execution.

Alfred's  
discoveries  
in the east.

This extraordinary prince did not confine his researches after the knowledge of distant countries to the cold uncomfortable regions of the north, though their inhabitants made then a more conspicuous figure than they do at present; but he was at equal pains to open a communication with the warmer climes of Asia: though our accounts of his efforts to this purpose are quite unsatisfactory. We know indeed

\* See Vita Ælfredi, Append. p. 207.

that there were such efforts made; but are left to guess how they were conducted. He kept a correspondence with Abel Patriarch of Jerusalem, whose letters to Alfred, Asserius, his friend and confidant, tells us, he had seen and read\*. From this prelate he no doubt received many valuable communications concerning the state of several countries of the east; and it was probably from him that he had intelligence of the Christians of St Thomas settled at Meliampour, on the Coromandel coast in the Hither India, and of their distressful circumstances. In whatever manner he received this information, he conceived the generous resolution of sending relief to those Christians, so far disjoined from all the rest of the Christian world; and at the same time of gaining some knowledge of those remote regions. To execute this resolution, he made choice of an Anglo-Saxon priest, named *Sighelm*; and he seems to have been very happy in his choice. “Sighelm,” says the best of our ancient historians, “was sent beyond sea with the King’s charity to the Christians of St Thomas in India, and executed that commission with wonderful good fortune; which is still the subject of universal admiration. For he really penetrated into India, and returning from thence, brought with him jewels of a new kind, with which that country very much abounds. Some of these jewels may

\* Asser. de Rebus gestis Ælfredi, p. 17.

“ still be seen among the treasures of the church  
 “ of Shereburn, of which Sighelm was made bi-  
 “ shop, after his return from India \*.” What  
 course this adventurous priest pursued in exe-  
 cuting this difficult commission, we are not in-  
 formed ; only we are told, that he first went to  
 Rome ; which makes it highly probable, that  
 he embarked on board some Venetian ship for  
 Alexandria in Egypt. For the Venetians car-  
 ried on a trade with Alexandria from the very  
 beginning of the ninth century, if not before †.  
 From Alexandria Sighelm might travel over  
 land to some port on the western shore of the  
 Red sea, where he might again embark, and  
 sailing down that sea, and passing the streights  
 of Babelmandel, he might cross the Arabian sea  
 to the coast of Malabar ; and sailing along that  
 coast, and doubling the cape, he would soon  
 arrive at the place of his destination. This,  
 however, is given only as conjecture, and not  
 as history. There can be no doubt, that Sig-  
 helm gave an ample relation of his travels to  
 his royal master at his return ; and if that had  
 been preserved, it would now have been esteemed  
 more valuable than all the jewels he brought  
 from India.

The art  
 of ship-  
 building  
 improved  
 by Alfred.

Besides these attempts to discover unknown  
 seas and countries, and thereby open new sources  
 of trade, Alfred promoted commerce in several

\* W. Malms. de Gestis Pontific. Anglor. l. 2. p. 141.

† Murator. Antiquitat. t. 2, p. 883.

other ways. He introduced new manufactures, which furnished many things for exportation, as well as for home consumption. He repaired the sea-ports, and particularly the city of London, the favourite seat of commerce in this island, which had been ruined by the Danes\*. But the chief means by which he promoted foreign commerce, was the great improvements which he made, by his inventive genius, in the art of ship-building. The ships used by the Danes, Saxons, and all the other nations of Europe at that time, were called *keels* or *cogs*; and were of a very clumsy form, short, broad, and low; which made them very slow sailors, and very hard to work †. Alfred observing these defects, gave directions to his workmen for building ships of a very different construction; which are thus described in the Saxon Chronicle, the most authentic monument of those times, from which all our subsequent historians have borrowed their accounts: “ The same year (897.) the Danish  
“ pirates of Northumberland, and of East-  
“ Anglia, plundered the coast of Wessex in a  
“ very grievous manner, especially towards the  
“ south. They did this in ships that had been  
“ built long before in the ancient form. Alfred,  
“ to oppose these, commanded ships to be built  
“ of a new construction. They were about  
“ twice the length of the former, and much  
“ more lofty; which made them much swifter

\* Asser. de Rebus gestis Alfreði, p. 15.

† W. Mahns. l. 1. c. 1.

“sailors, more steady in the water, and not so apt to roll. Some of these new vessels had sixty oars, and some even more\*.” From this description, short and imperfect as it is, we may perceive that this was a great improvement in naval architecture; and that the ships of this new construction were not only more beautiful, but also more commodious, either for war or commerce, than the former. By their length and sharpness, they ploughed the sea with greater ease and celerity. By their altitude, when employed in commerce, they secured both men and goods more effectually from the waves; and when engaged in war, for which they were first invented, they were more difficult to board, and gave the combatants the great advantage of throwing their weapons from above on those below them. They appear to have been a kind of gallies, or galliots, navigated with oars as well as sails, that they might prosecute their voyage, or pursue their enemies, in a calm as well as on a wind. Of the size, capacity, and burden of these ships, we can say nothing with certainty, but that they required sixty or seventy sailors to navigate them; which is a sufficient evidence that they were not very small†.

The naval power and trade of England, greatly increased by Alfred.

By these and the like means, this extraordinary prince raised the naval power and foreign commerce of England, from that state of annihila-

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 98.

† See Spelman's *Life of Alfred*, p. 50. 51. Dr. Campbell's *Lives of the Admirals*, vol. 1. p. 53.

tion in which he found them at the beginning of his reign; and before the end of it, rendered them both much greater than ever they had been in any former period of the Saxon government. That the naval power of England was greater in his time than ever it had been before, is evident from the many victories which he obtained over the Danes at sea, who till then had been considered as invincible on that element. That the foreign commerce of England was also greater, is no less evident from the superior splendour of his court, and the greater quantities of cash, and of foreign commodities, that were then in England; some of them the produce of very distant countries, which could only be procured by commerce\*. We have already heard of the precious stones brought from India; and Asserius tells us, that one morning, after Alfred had made him a grant of two abbeys, with all their furniture, he gave him a present of a very fine silk cloak, and of as much frankincense as a strong man could carry, accompanied with this obliging expression,—“ That these were but trifles in comparison of what he designed to give him †.” This is a sufficient proof that Alfred was possessed of considerable quantities of the most precious productions of the East, the happy effects of a flourishing trade.

As England had gained more by the life, so it suffered more by the death of Alfred, than by

The trade of England hurt by the death of Alfred.

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 290. n.

† Asser. de Rebus gestis *Ælfredi*, p. 15.

that of any other prince that had ever filled the throne ; because many great designs which he had formed for advancing the prosperity of his kingdom, and the felicity of his subjects, perished with him. If this prince performed so much in the midst of the tumults of war, what would he not have accomplished, if his life had been prolonged, after he had triumphed over all his enemies, and brought his kingdom into a state of perfect order and tranquillity ? It was, however, so far happy, that some degree of the genius of Alfred descended to his son Edward, and his grandson Athelstan, who were educated under his eye, to say nothing of his daughter Athelfleda Countess of Mercia, who inherited a still greater portion of her father's spirit.

History of  
trade in  
the reign  
of Edward  
the Elder.

Edward the elder, who mounted the throne in the first year of the tenth century, influenced by the precepts and example of his illustrious father, gave proper attention to the naval power and commerce of his kingdom. For though he was chiefly engaged, during his whole reign, in reducing the turbulent Danes of East-Anglia and Northumberland to a more perfect subjection, and in fortifying many towns and castles for the internal security of the country, he constantly kept up a fleet of a hundred ships, with which he protected the trade of his subjects, and maintained the dominion of the sea \*.

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 102.



Athelstan, the eldest son and successor of Edward, was at much greater pains to increase the naval power and commerce of England than his father had been. This wise prince, sensible of the great advantages of foreign trade, encouraged his subjects to engage in it, by making it the road to honour as well as wealth. For by one of his laws it was enacted,—“ If a mariner or merchant so prosper, as to make three voyages over the high seas, with a ship and cargo of his own, he shall be advanced to the honour and dignity of a thane\*.” This excellent law, which discovers an equal knowledge of human nature and of the true interest of England, must have been productive of very great effects, though the particulars are not preserved in the scanty annals of those times. Athelstan, still further to facilitate and encourage commerce, established a mint, or mints, in every town in England that had any considerable foreign trade, that the merchants might have an opportunity of converting the bullion that they brought home for their goods into current coin, without much expense or trouble. These towns were London, Canterbury, Winchester, Rochester, Exeter, Lewes, Hastings, Chichester, Southampton, Werham, and Shaftesbury †. These and other wise regulations excited such a spirit for trade, and so much increased the shipping and seamen of England, that Athelstan maintained the do-

Trade promoted by King Athelstan.

\* Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 71.

† *Id.* p. 59.

minion of the sea, and obliged the Danish and Norwegian princes to court his friendship. "All Europe," says William of Malmesbury, "praised his praises, and extolled his virtues to the skies. Happy did those foreign princes think themselves, and not without reason, who could gain his friendship, either by presents or alliance. Harold King of Norway sent him a fine ship with a gilded stern and purple sails, surrounded and defended on all sides with a row of gilded shields\*." Nothing but a flourishing foreign trade, and a powerful navy, could have made a king of England to be so much respected and courted by the princes on the Continent; especially in those times, when there were hardly any political connections between distant nations.

History of  
trade and  
shipping in  
the reign of  
Edgar the  
Peaceable.

Though nothing seems to have been done in the short reigns of Edmund, Edred, and Edwi, from A. D. 941, to A. D. 957, for the encouragement of commerce; yet the spirit that had been awakened continued to operate, and the naval power and trade of England to increase. This enabled Edgar the Peaceable, who succeeded his unfortunate brother Edwi, to raise a greater fleet, and make a more distinguished figure at sea, than any of his predecessors. This prince, however, was so great a favourite of the monks, the only historians of those times, that every thing they say of him must be under-

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6.

stood with caution ; and, in particular, their accounts of the number of his ships are perfectly incredible, some making them 3000, some 3600, and some no fewer than 4000 \*. These numbers are so extravagant, that it seems most probable that the transcribers have added a cypher, and thereby made them ten times the real number. Is it possible to imagine that a king of England, in the infancy of foreign trade, had three hundred thousand seamen in his service ? and yet so many it would require to man a fleet of three thousand ships, allowing only one hundred men to each ship, which is certainly a very moderate computation. The above conjecture concerning the transcribers is the more probable, that one of our ancient historians makes the number of King Edgar's ships only three hundred †. Even this was a great number, and shews the rapid increase of the English navy, from one hundred (the complement of it in the reign of Edward the Elder) to three hundred, in the short space of fifty years. This fleet King Edgar divided into three equal squadrons ; one of which he stationed on the east coast, another on the south, and the third on the north, for the protection of these coasts, and maintaining the dominion of the sea. What our historians further add concerning his sailing round the whole island of Britain every summer in these fleets, and visiting in person every creek and harbour,

\* Hoveden. p. 426. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607. Abbas Rieval. p. 360. Brompt.

† W. Thorn.

can hardly be strictly true \*. All that we can depend upon in this matter is, that by the gradual increase of trade, seamen, and shipping, Edgar had a greater fleet than any of his predecessors; which he kept in excellent order, and with which he effectually protected the coasts of his kingdom, and the commerce of his subjects. This is all an English monarch ought to wish; and short of this he ought not to stop. Besides the protection and encouragement that Edgar the Peaceable gave to foreign trade, he made several laws for regulating the internal commerce of his subjects. By one of these laws it was enacted, “ That all the money coined in the kingdom should be of one kind; and that no man should refuse it in payments; and that the measures used at Winchester should be used over all the kingdom † :” A wise regulation, which probably never took effect. By another law it was appointed, that thirty-three honest men should be chosen in large towns, and twelve in small towns, to be witnesses to all bargains within these towns; and that no man should either buy or sell any thing but before two or three of these sworn witnesses. When any member of a decennary or tithing went to a distant market, he was required, by another law, to acquaint the tithingman or burgholder what he designed to buy or sell, and also to acquaint him at his return what he had bought or sold ‡. All

\* W. Malm. l. 2. c. 7.

† Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 78.

‡ Id. p. 80, 81.

these, and several other troublesome restrictions of the same kind, designed to prevent frauds, and the sale of stolen goods, sufficiently shew, that commercial transactions were but few in comparison of what they are at present, and that little mutual confidence reigned among the members of society.

The minorities of the two sons of Edgar the Peaceable, and the weakness of Ethelred, the youngest of them, after he arrived at man's estate, were very fatal to the naval power, commerce, and prosperity of England; for those who had the direction of affairs under these princes, observing the profound peace and security that the kingdom enjoyed, occasioned by the vigour of the late government, imagined that a navy was become unnecessary, and suffered their ships to rot in their harbours. It was not long before their ancient enemies the Danes received intelligence, and took advantage of this fatal error. At first, indeed, those destructive rovers approached the coasts of England with a kind of dread and diffidence, as afraid to rouse a sleeping lion; but finding the defenceless state of these coasts, they boldly poured upon them on all sides, and spread desolation and misery from one end of the kingdom to the other. It is as unnecessary as it would be unpleasant, to give a minute detail of all the defeats, disgraces, and miseries, which the English suffered in the long unhappy reign of Ethelred the Unready; which were chiefly owing to their neglect of maritime

History of  
trade and  
shipping  
in the  
reign of  
Ethelred  
the Un-  
ready.

affairs, and the want of a sufficient fleet to protect their trade and coasts, and maintain the dominion of the surrounding seas\*. After having often tried the shameful expedient of bribing their enemies, by great sums of money, to desist from their depredations; and finding that this, like throwing oil into a fire, instead of diminishing, increased their violence; they became sensible of their error in neglecting their fleet, the only impenetrable bulwark of their country. To correct this error, a law was made A. D. 1008, obliging the proprietors of every 310 hides of land to furnish a ship for the royal navy †. In consequence of this law, a very great fleet was raised of near eight hundred ships; which, says the Saxon Chronicle, was greater than any that had ever been seen in England in the reign of any former king ‡. This is a sufficient proof, that the merchants and mariners of England, in the midst of all the miseries of their country, had not abandoned the sea, or neglected foreign trade; for so great a fleet could not have been raised by any but a commercial people. Of this there are some other evidences. In this reign, several wise and humane laws were made for the security of the persons, ships, and effects of merchants, when they were driven into an English harbour by stress of weather, or were wrecked upon the coast; which show, that it was the intention of the legislators to encourage foreign

\* Chron. Saxon, p. 125—146.

† Id. p. 136.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

trade \*. By other laws made in a great council, or wittenagemot, held at Wantage, the rates of the customs to be paid on the importation of various kinds of goods at the wharf of Billingsgate, in the port of London, were settled †. From these laws it also appears, that there was a society or company of German merchants, called *the emperor's men*, then residing in London, who were obliged to pay to the King for his protection, twice a-year (at Christmas and Easter), two pieces of gray cloth, and one piece of brown cloth, ten pounds of pepper, five pair of gloves, and two casks of wine ‡. This company was probably the same with that which was afterwards so well known by the name of the *Merchants of the Steelyard*. There is still extant a kind of commercial treaty between King Ethelred and the Princes of Wales, by which a court was constituted, consisting of six English law-men and six Welsh law-men (as they are called), who were to determine all disputes that should arise between the people of England and Wales ||.

Though the total subjection of the English to the Danes, A. D. 1017, was fatal to some noble families, and involved the Anglo-Saxon princes in great distress, it was, in some respects, salutary to the kingdom, and particularly to its commerce, by putting an end to those bloody wars between

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 104.

† Brompton, p. 887. Anderson's Hist. Commerce, vol. 1. p. 52.

‡ Id. ibid.

|| Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 125.

History of  
trade in  
the reign  
of Canute  
the Great.

the two nations, which had raged about forty years with little intermission. Canute the Great, being a wise as well as a warlike prince, endeavoured to gain the affections of his English subjects, by affording them the most effectual protection, and every encouragement in his power\*. He sent home to Denmark, as soon as he could do it with safety, the greatest part of his Danish troops, that they might no longer be either a burden or terror to the English. He also dismissed all his fleet, except forty ships, which he retained for some time to protect the trade and coasts of England †. He employed that influence which his high reputation, his extensive dominions, and his mighty power, gave him with foreign princes, in procuring favours and privileges from them for his trading subjects. When he was at Rome A. D. 1031, he negotiated a commercial treaty in person with the Emperor Conrad II. and Rodolph III. the last King of Arles; in which he obtained very extraordinary exemptions for the English merchants in the dominions of these princes. This we learn from his own letter which he sent from Rome to the nobility of England. “ I spoke with the Emperor, the Pope, “ and all the princes whom I found here, about “ the grievances of my subjects, English as well “ as Danes; and insisted that they should be “ more favourably treated in time to come, and “ not so much vexed with tolls and exactions of

\* W. Mahns. l. 2. c. 11.

† Chron. Saxon. p. 151.



“ various kinds in their dominions. The Em-  
“ peror, King Rodolph, and the other princes,  
“ complied with my remonstrances, and con-  
“ sented, that all my subjects, merchants, as  
“ well as those who travelled on a religious  
“ account, should meet with no interruption,  
“ but should be protected without paying any  
“ toll\*.” Under the auspices of this powerful  
prince, the trade of England flourished greatly,  
and the English merchants, especially those of  
London, acquired a degree of weight and in-  
fluence in the public councils of the kingdom,  
formerly unknown. This appeared in a strong  
light, from the important part they acted in the  
very beginning of the next reign, as we learn  
from the best authority. “ As soon as Canute  
“ was dead, a great assembly of the nobility met  
“ at Oxford, where were present Earl Leofric,  
“ almost all the thanes to the north of the  
“ Thames, and the seamen of London, who  
“ chose Harold to be King of all England†.”  
These seamen of London, who were members of  
this wittenagemot, or great council, were prob-  
ably such merchants of that city as had made  
three voyages beyond seas in ships of their own,  
and had thereby acquired a legal title to the dig-  
nity of thanes. The tranquillity that England  
enjoyed after the accession of the Danish princes  
was so great, that the royal navy was reduced by  
Canute to sixteen ships; for the support of which

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 11.

† Chron. Saxon. p. 154.

an equitable and moderate tax was imposed; and on this footing it continued during all the remainder of his reign, and the whole reign of his successor Harold. Each mariner on board this fleet was allowed eight mancusses, and each commander twelve mancusses, a-year, for pay and provisions; which was a very liberal allowance in those times \*. Hardicanute, the last of the Danish kings of England, kept a fleet of sixty ships, and gave his seamen the same generous allowance; which rendered the tax imposed for their support so heavy, that it became the occasion of much discontent and of some tumults †. The restoration of the Saxon line to the crown of England, in the person of Edward the Confessor, made no material change in the naval power or commerce of the kingdom; which were both in a flourishing state at the conclusion of this period.

State of  
the ship-  
ping of  
England  
at the end  
of this  
period.

It is quite impossible, at this distance of time, to discover the numbers or the tonnage of the ships belonging to England at the Norman conquest; but there is sufficient evidence that they were both considerable. To lay no stress on the exaggerated accounts of the prodigious fleets of Edgar the Peaceable, that of King Ethelred, which was raised after the English had suffered many losses both by sea and land, consisted of near eight hundred ships; besides which, there

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 155. Flor. Wigorn. p. 623.

† W. Malms. l. 2. c. 12.

were, no doubt, many employed in trade at the same time. After this, the shipping of England continued to increase to the very conclusion of this period, when it is not improbable they might amount to two or three thousand vessels, from twenty to one hundred tons. From the representation of many of these ships in the famous tapestry of Bayeux, it appears, that they were a kind of gallies with one mast, on which was spread one very large sail, by means of a yard raised to near the top of it with pullies. Their shape was not inelegant, their stems adorned with the heads of men, lions, or other animals, which, if we may believe historians, were sometimes gilded\*. Though the following description of the ships of that great fleet, with which King Canute invaded England, is evidently too poetical to be strictly true, yet as it was composed by a cotemporary writer, who was probably an eye-witness of what he describes, it merits some attention: “ So great was the splendour  
“ and beauty of the ships of his mighty fleet,  
“ that they dazzled the eyes, and struck terror  
“ into the hearts of the beholders: for the rays  
“ of the sun reflected from the bright shields and  
“ polished arms of the soldiers, and the sides of  
“ the ships gilded with gold and silver, exhibited a spectacle equally terrible and magnificent. On the top of the mast of every ship  
“ was the gilded figure of some bird, which,

\* Montfaucon *Monumens François*; t. I. p. 376. *Memoires de l'Academie Royale*, l. 12.

“ turning on a spindle with the winds, discovered from whence they blew. The stems of the ships were adorned with various figures cast in metal, and gilded with gold and silver. On one you might behold the statue of a man, with a countenance as fierce and menacing as if he had been alive; on another a most terrible golden lion; on a third a dragon of burnished brass; and on a fourth a furious bull with gilded horns, in act to rush on the terrified spectators. In a word, the appearance of this fleet was at once so grand and formidable, that it filled all who saw it with dread and admiration of the prince to whom it belonged; and his enemies were more than half vanquished by their eyes, before they came to blows\*.” If we could depend on the truth of this description, we should be inclined to think, that the Danes and Saxons had made much greater progress in several arts than is commonly imagined.

English  
exports in  
this period.

Though the merchant ships in this period were very small and trifling in comparison of those at present used in foreign trade, they were sufficient to export and import considerable quantities of goods. But of those exports and imports we are not able to add much to the account contained in the second volume of this work, to which we refer the reader †.

\* *Encomium Emmæ*, apud Duchesne, p. 166.

† Vol. 2. c. 6. p. 202—205. 218—228.

Slaves still continued to form one of the most valuable articles of exportation from England in this period; and great numbers of unhappy men, women, and children, were carried out of this island, and, like cattle, exposed to sale in all the markets of Europe. It was the sight of a number of English slaves exposed in this manner in the market at Rome, that inspired Gregory the Great with the resolution of attempting the conversion of their countrymen to Christianity. “As Gregory was one day passing through the market-place, soon after a company of foreign merchants had arrived, and set out the various kinds of goods which they had brought to sell, he observed a number of young men, of fair complexions, fine air, and beautiful faces, exposed to sale. Being struck with their appearance, he inquired from what country they came; and was told, that they come from the Isle of Britain, and the kingdom of Deira. He then asked whether the inhabitants of that country were Christians or Pagans? and being answered that they were Pagans, he broke out into this exclamation,—“ ‘Wo is me, that men, so amiable in their external appearance, should be destitute of the grace of God in their souls!’ and immediately applied to the Pope, (for it was before he was Pope himself), and earnestly intreated him to send missionaries into England, to attempt the conversion of that country to Christianity \*.”

\* Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1.

The mildest fate that those unhappy persons could expect, who were taken prisoners in the long wars between the Saxons and Britons, between the several kingdoms of the heptarchy, and between the English and Danes, was, to be sold as slaves; which furnished a constant and plentiful supply to those merchants who were engaged in this disgraceful traffic. Many of these slave-merchants were Jews, who found a good market for their Christian slaves among the Saracens in Spain and Africa \*. This occasioned several laws and canons of the church to be made in England, and other countries, against selling Christian slaves to Jews or Pagans †.

Examples  
of the slave  
trade.

The exportation of slaves from some parts of England continued to the very end of this period. "Some young men," says William of Malmsbury, "were exported from Northumberland to be sold, according to a custom which seems to be natural to the people of that country, of selling their nearest relations for their own advantage: a custom which we see them practise even in our own days ‡." The people of Bristol seem to have been no less addicted to this ignominious branch of trade; of which we have the following curious account in the life of Wulfstan, who was Bishop of Worcester at the Norman conquest. "There is a sea-port town called *Bristol*, opposite to Ireland, into which its inhabitants make fre-

\* Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 883.

† Johnston's Canons, A. D. 740.

‡ W. Malms. l. 1. c. 3.

“quent voyages on account of trade. Wulf-  
 “stan cured the people of this town of a most  
 “odious and inveterate custom, which they de-  
 “rived from their ancestors, of buying men and  
 “women in all parts of England, and export-  
 “ing them to Ireland for the sake of gain.  
 “The young women they commonly got with  
 “child, and carried them to market in their  
 “pregnancy, that they might bring a better  
 “price. You might have seen, with sorrow,  
 “long ranks of young persons of both sexes  
 “and of the greatest beauty, tied together with  
 “ropes, and daily exposed to sale: nor were  
 “these men ashamed, O horrid wickedness! to  
 “give up their nearest relations, nay, their own  
 “children, to slavery. Wulfstan, knowing the  
 “obstinacy of these people, sometimes stayed  
 “two months amongst them, preaching every  
 “Lord’s day; by which, in process of time, he  
 “made so great an impression upon their minds,  
 “that they abandoned that wicked trade, and  
 “set an example to all the rest of England to  
 “do the same \*.”

English horses, which were universally ad-<sup>Horses, &c.</sup>  
 mired, made another valuable article of the ex-  
 ports of this period; but the following law of  
 King Athelstan’s probably gave some check to  
 that branch of trade: “No man shall export  
 “any horses beyond seas, except such as he  
 “designs to give in presents †.” We have no

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 253.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 52.

direct evidence that corn was exported from England in this period, as it had been from provincial Britain in the Roman times; and when we reflect on the imperfect state of agriculture among the Anglo-Saxons, we shall be inclined to think, that it was not, or at least not with any constancy, or in any considerable quantities.

Imports.

Our information concerning the different kinds of goods imported into England in this period (besides those mentioned in the second volume of this work), is also very imperfect. Books, especially on religious subjects, and for the use of churches, made no inconsiderable article of importation, as they bore a very high price, were much wanted, and much desired \*. The relics, pictures, and images of saints, which were objects of great veneration in those dark ages, were imported in great quantities, and at a great expense; as also vestments for the clergy, veils, altar-cloths, silver vessels for the celebration of the sacraments, and, in a word, all the different utensils and ornaments of churches. This sacred traffic was chiefly managed by priests, who were believed to be the best judges of those commodities, some of which had little or no intrinsic value. The famous Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremouth, made several voyages in this trade, and brought home valuable cargoes of books, relics, pictures, statues, vessels, vestments, &c. which he had purchased

\* W. Malms. de Pontificibus, l. 5.



in France and Italy. He furnished and adorned his own monastery with some of these goods, and sold the rest to very great advantage\*. It was the constant practice of the founders of churches and monasteries, and of all other English prelates, who visited foreign countries, to collect and import those kinds of merchandise for the use of their own and other churches; and he who brought home the greatest quantity of relics, made the most profitable voyage, and was esteemed the greatest saint. When the city of Venice first, and afterwards the cities of Pisa and Amalphi, became the repositories of the precious productions and manufactures of the East, these cities were visited by English merchants, who imported from thence precious stones, gold, silver, silk, linen, spiceries, drugs, and other kinds of goods†. It was to these cities of Italy that those voyages were made which raised the persons who made them to the dignity of thanes. Wines were imported from Spain and France, cloths from Germany and Flanders, and furs, deer-skins, whale oil, ropes, &c. &c. from Scandinavia‡. It is unnecessary to make this enumeration more complete, as it sufficiently appears already, “that the foreign trade of  
“ England was so extensive, even in this remote  
“ period, as to furnish such of her inhabitants

\* Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. passim.

† Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 883.

‡ Anderson's Hist. Comm. vol. 1. p. 52. Vita Ælfredi, Append. 6.

“ as could afford to pay for them, with a share  
“ of all the commodities that were then known  
“ in any part of Europe.”

Balance of  
trade in  
favour of  
England.

As we have no means of discovering the quantities of the goods exported and imported in this period, it is quite impossible to find out how the balance of trade stood between England and any foreign country. We have good reason, however, to believe, that upon the whole the balance was in favour of England; and that her foreign trade was really profitable, by bringing home cash or bullion for the increase of the national treasures, as well as goods for consumption. If this had not been the case, it would have been impossible for England, without mines of gold or silver, to have supplied the great losses of cash which she sustained,—by the depredations and exactions of the Danes,—by the tax of Peter-pence paid annually to Rome,—and by the many expensive journies of her princes, prelates, and nobles, into foreign countries. These continual drains, for which no returns were made, must have carried off all the money in the kingdom long before the end of this period, if fresh supplies had not been brought home by trade. But there is a still stronger proof of this, arising from the considerable quantities of foreign coins, particularly gold coins, that were current in England in this period; which were no doubt brought home by the merchants as the balance of trade in favour of this country. These coins were so plenti-

ful, that almost all great payments for estates, donations to churches, and valuable legacies, were made in them \*. The considerable quantities of gold and silver that were made into plate, jewels, and trinkets of various kinds, afford a further evidence of the truth of what is above advanced †. Besides, it is believed, that the quantity of money in England of our own coining gradually increased in the course of this period; which is one of the best evidences of a profitable foreign trade.

To prevent that confusion which is apt to arise from blending several subjects together, little hath yet been said of coin or money, the great instrument of commerce, and one of the happiest of human inventions. History of coin or money.

Before we proceed to give the history of money made of gold, silver, or other metals, it may be proper to take some notice of a singular kind of money, which is often mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon monuments of this period, by the name of *living money* ‡. This consisted of slaves, and cattle of all kinds, which had a certain value set upon them by law, at which they passed current in the payment of debts and the purchase of commodities of all kinds, and supplied the deficiency of money properly so called. Thus for example, when one person owed another a certain sum of money, which he had not a suffi- Living money.

\*. See Clarke on Coins, p. 263.

‡ Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, l. 1. c. 10.

† Id. p. 275, 276.

cient quantity of coin to pay, he supplied that deficiency by giving a certain number of slaves, horses, cows, or sheep, at the rate set upon them by law when they passed for money, to make up the sum \*. It was also very common in those times, when one man purchased an estate from another, to purchase all the living money upon it at the same time; *i. e.* to take all the slaves, horses, and other animals upon it, at the rate stamped upon them by law when they were considered as money †. All kinds of mulcts imposed by the state, or penances by the church, might have been paid either in dead or living money, as was most convenient; with this single exception, that the church, designing to discourage slavery, refused to accept of slaves as money in the payment of penances ‡. In those parts of Britain where coins were very scarce, almost all debts were paid, and purchases made, with living money. This was so much the case, both in Scotland and Wales, that it hath been very much doubted, whether there were any coins struck in either of those countries in this period ||. This much at least is certain, that no coins of any of the Scotch or Welsh princes who flourished in this period have been found: a sufficient proof, that if there ever were any such coins, they were very scarce. To supply this

\* Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, l. 1. c. 23.

† Id. *ibid.* c. 11.

‡ Johnson's Canons, A. D. 877. Can. 7.

|| Andersoni Diplomata Scotiæ, præfat. p. 57. Camden's Remains, p. 181.

defect, an exact value was set upon all animals by law, according to which they were to be received in all payments, and by which they became living money \*. This seems to have been a kind of intermediate step between mere barter, and the universal use of coin.

It is now time to enter upon a short deduction of the state of coin in Great Britain, its weights, denominations, and other circumstances, from the beginning to the end of this period: an intricate perplexing subject, in which, after all the labours of many learned and ingenious men, some things are dark and doubtful, and on which it is no shame to fail of giving entire satisfaction. History of coin.

It hath been already proved, that provincial Britain was very rich in money in the flourishing times of the Roman government, and that much of it was carried away by the Romans at their departure †. But though this was true, it is probable, or rather certain, that considerable sums of Roman money were left behind, in the hands of the provincial Britons, and of those Romans who chose to remain in Britain, rather than abandon their houses and estates. This made provincial Britain, after all the losses it had sustained by the departure of the Romans, and the depredations of the Scots and Picts, a valuable prize, on account of its cash, as well State of coin from the departure of the Romans to the establishment of the Saxons.

\* Vide *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 3. c. 5. p. 230—257.

† See vol. ii. p. 258.

as of the verdure of its plains; and the former had probably as great charms in the eyes of the Saxons as the latter. For those adventurers, at their arrival in this island, were far from being ignorant of the use, or indifferent about the possession, of money; on the contrary, the acquisition of it had been one of the chief objects of those piratical expeditions to which they had been long accustomed \*. As soon as they began to quarrel with the Britons, they seized their cash, as well as their lands and goods, converted it to their own use, and employed it in commerce. The current coin of England, therefore, in the former part of this period, was partly Roman money, which the several armies of Saxon adventurers had taken from the unhappy Britons, and partly German money, which they had brought with them from the continent. For as those armies came into this island with a design to settle in it, and brought their wives and children with them, we may be certain that they did not leave their cash behind them.

The first  
Saxon  
coins.

It is impossible to discover when the princes of the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the heptarchy began to coin money of their own: though it is highly probable they exercised this prerogative of royalty soon after they assumed the name of kings. In the most ancient of their laws, which are those of Ethelbright, who was King of Kent from A. D. 561, to A. D. 616, all the

\* Bartholin. de Causis Contemptæ apud Danos Mortis, p. 449.

mulcts are estimated in shillings, which were Saxon coins or denominations of money \*: a proof that this money was become the current coin of the kingdom before that period. It is true indeed, that the oldest Anglo-Saxon coin yet discovered, (except one of Ethelbright's, which Camden says he had seen), is one of Edwin's, who was King of Northumberland from A. D. 617, to A. D. 633; and it is even far from being certain that this coin belonged to Edwin. But this is no evidence that there were not many pieces coined by the more ancient kings of that and of the other kingdoms †.

When the precious metals of gold and silver were first employed as the great instruments of commerce, and the representatives of all commodities, they were paid by weight, without any impression; and even after pieces of these metals began to be stamped or coined, these pieces were still certain well-known weights of the country where they were coined; the smaller coins being commonly regular subdivisions of the greater, as halves, fourths, &c. But as it would have been inconvenient, on many accounts, to have stamped very large pieces of gold and silver, or, in other words, to have made very large unportable coins, it became usual to make a certain fixed number of coins out of a certain weight of metal, as a pound, an ounce, &c. and then to call that number of coins by the name of that weight.

Distinction  
between  
real and  
nominal  
money.

\* Leges Saxon. p. 2. &c.

† Hiccsii Dissertat. Epist. p. 181. Camd. Remains, p. 161.

This introduced the distinction between real coins, as crowns, half-crowns, shillings, &c. and denominations of money, as pounds, marks, nobles, &c. each of the latter containing a certain fixed and well-known number of the former. Monies of both these kinds are frequently mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons; and therefore the most methodical and satisfactory way of treating this intricate subject seems to be this,—first to set down all the different kinds of money, whether real coins or mere denominations, that were known and used in England in this period, beginning with the highest, and ending with the lowest; and then to give some account of each of these kinds of money, in the same order.

Names of  
Anglo-  
Saxon  
money.

*The different kinds of money that are mentioned in the laws and histories of England in this period.*

- |                  |                           |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. The pound,    | 7. The sceata,            |
| 2. The mark,     | 8. The penny,             |
| 3. The mancus,   | 9. The halfling, or half- |
| 4. The ora,      | penny,                    |
| 5. The shilling, | 10. The feorthling,       |
| 6. The thrimsa,  | 11. The stica.            |

The pound. The pound of money is very often mentioned in the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, as well as in many passages of their history. Thus, by these laws, the king's weregeld was two hundred and forty pounds of silver, one half to be paid to the



public for the loss of its sovereign, and the other half to the royal family for the loss of its head \*. It is almost unnecessary to take notice, that the Anglo-Saxon pound was not a real coin : for coins of such weight would at any time be inconvenient, but, when the precious metals were so scarce and valuable, would have been peculiarly improper. The pound was then, as it is at present, only a denomination of money ; but with this remarkable difference, that it was then a just and real denomination, and implied what the word imports, whereas at present, it is an arbitrary name given to a sum of money that weighs only about one-third of a pound. Whenever, therefore, we meet with the pound in the laws and history of the Anglo-Saxons, it signifies as many of their coins of any kind as were actually made out of a pound of metal, and, if thrown into the scale, would have weighed a pound. Their nummulary language in this particular was perfectly agreeable to truth, and conveyed the clearest ideas to their minds ; because they could not but know the weight of their own pound, and how many pieces of each kind of coin were made out of it. Be we who live at so great a distance of time, and have such imperfect monuments of those ages, are not so well acquainted with those two particulars, which hath been the occasion of almost all the darkness and uncertainty in which this subject

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 64.

is involved. It will be proper, therefore, before we proceed one step further, to endeavour to discover, if possible, the real weight of the money-pound of the Anglo-Saxons.

Weight of  
the Saxon  
money-  
pound.

Weights and measures are among the first things that are adjusted by the people of all countries, after their emerging from the savage state, and beginning to have any commercial intercourse among themselves, or with the rest of mankind: for, till these are settled and understood, neither foreign nor domestic trade can be carried on with any tolerable degree of justice or exactness. We may be very certain, therefore, that the Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in this island, had their own weights and measures, handed down to them from their ancestors, and firmly established by immemorial custom. We may be no less certain that they brought these their ancient national weights and measures with them, and that they and their posterity continued to use them in their new settlements in this island, as they and their ancestors had done in their old ones on the continent; for there is hardly any one thing of which nations are more tenacious, than of their weights and measures. There is no probability, therefore, in the conjecture of some learned men,—that the Anglo-Saxons adopted the Roman weights and measures which they found in use among the provincial Britons, and laid their own aside\*. This was a compliment

\* Gronov. de Pecun. Vet. p. 347. Hooper on Ancient Weights and Measures, p. 400.

they were by no means disposed to pay, to a nation with whom they had no friendly intercourse, and against whom they were animated with the most implacable hatred. Nor is this conjecture more agreeable to historical evidence, than to probability. The late learned Mr Folkes discovered that the Tower pound, which continued so long in use in the English mints, was the money-pound of the Anglo-Saxons. “It is reasonable to think,” says he, “that William the Conqueror introduced no new weight into his mints, but that the same weight used there for some ages, and called the pound of the Tower, was the old pound of the Saxon moneyers before the conquest. This pound was lighter than the Troy pound, by three quarters of an ounce Troy\*.” This estimate of the Tower or Saxon money-pound, is supported by the unquestionable evidence of a verdict remaining in the Exchequer, dated October 30. A. D. 1527: “And whereas heretofore the merchants chaunte paid for coinage of every pound Towre of fyne gold, weighing xi oz. quarter Troye, 11 s. vi d. Now it is determined by the King’s Highness, and his said counccille, that the foresaid pound Towre shall be no more used and occupied; but all manner of gold and silver shall be wayed by the pound Troye, which maketh xii oz. Troye, which exceedeth the pound Towre in weight 111

\* Tables of English Silver Coins, p. 1. 2.

“quarters of the oz. \*.” The old Tower or Saxon ounce, the twelfth part of the Tower or Saxon pound, as taken from the accounts in the Exchequer, A. D. 1527, was 450 Troy grains †. From the above account, it appears that the Anglo-Saxon money-pound, with its subdivision of grains and ounces, stood thus:

Troy grains.

450	ounce,	
5400	12	pound.

Mr Folkes gives another estimate of the Saxon or Tower pound, taken from the chamber of accounts at Paris, about Edward III.'s time, which is a very little different from that given above, making the Tower ounce 451.76 Troy grains ‡. But this difference is so trifling, being hardly thirteen grains in the pound, that it merits no attention.

There is one circumstance that makes it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the Anglo-Saxons brought this money-pound with them from the continent; which is this,—that it is the same with the German money-pound, to a degree of exactness that could not be owing to accident, but proves that they were derived from one origin, viz. the pound of their common

\* Tables of English Silver Coins, p. 1. 2.

† Clarke on Coins, p. 24.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

ancestors the ancient Germans. The great resemblance, or rather identity, of these pounds, will appear from the following table :

	<i>Troy grains.</i>
The Old Tower or Saxon ounce, -	450
The present Colonia ounce, -	451.38
The Standard Strasburg ounce, -	451.38
The Tower or Saxon ounce in Edward III.'s time, -	451.76

The learned Mr Clarke (to whose curious researches I gratefully acknowledge I am much indebted) traces the origin of the Saxon money-pound much higher, and deduces it from the ancient Greek pound. But the shortest abridgment that could be given of that deduction, would be too long for this place\*. It is sufficient to observe upon the whole, that if the above account be just, "the money-pound of the " Anglo-Saxons was the denomination or name " of as many coins of any kind as were coined " out of a mass of metal weighing 5400 Troy " grains." The names and numbers of these coins will afterwards appear; but it may not be improper to take notice at present, that out of every such pound of silver were coined 240 silver pennies, each weighing  $22\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, twenty pennies out of every ounce. If the Saxons had such a coin as a shilling (which it is highly probable they had), forty-eight of these shillings

\* See Clarke on Coins, p. 26.

were coined out of every pound of silver, four out of every ounce; each shilling containing five pennies; and weighing  $112\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains.

Another  
money-  
pound.

It must not be concealed, than some eminent writers on this subject have been of opinion, that the Anglo-Saxons had another money-pound of fifteen ounces\*. This opinion is chiefly founded on the following law of King Athelstan, who reigned in the former part of the tenth century :  
 “ A ceorl’s weregeld, by the Mercian law, is  
 “ two hundred shillings; a thane’s weregeld is  
 “ six times as much, or twelve hundred shil-  
 “ lings; the simple weregeld of a king is equal  
 “ to that of six thanes, or thirty thousand sceatas,  
 “ which make one hundred and twenty pounds.  
 “ The kingbote, which is to be paid to the  
 “ kingdom, is equal to the weregeld, which is to  
 “ be paid to the royal family†.” From this law it appears, that at this time six times 1200 shillings, or 7200 shillings were equal to 120 pounds; which they could not be, unless there were 60 shillings in the pound. Now, if there had been only four of these shillings coined out of an ounce, it is certain that the pound, out of which sixty of them were coined, must have contained 15 ounces. But the most probable account of this matter seems to be this: that about this time the weight and value of the

\* Hiccesii Dissertat. Epistol. p. 111. Sir Andrew Fontaine, *ibid.* p. 165.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 64.

shilling was diminished one fifth part ; and instead of containing five pennies, and weighing  $112\frac{1}{2}$  grains, it contained only four pennies, and weighed only 90 grains. This diminution of the shilling might be owing to a scarcity of silver, occasioned by the depredations of the Danes, and exigencies of the state, or to some other cause to us unknown. If this supposition be admitted, the monstrous absurdity of having two money-pounds, with their numerous subdivisions, current in the same country at the same time, (which would have introduced intolerable confusion and perplexity into all money-transactions), will be avoided : the pound will remain the same, consisting of 12 ounces, out of which were coined, for a time, sixty shillings, each containing only four pennies, and weighing only 90 grains. This supposition is almost converted into a certainty, when we consider, that all writers on this subject allow, that there never were either more or fewer than 240 pennies in the pound ; and that this proportion between the pound and the penny was always observed in all the gradual diminutions of the pound, and is observed at this day : but if the shilling contained five pennies, when there were sixty of them in the pound, as it certainly did when there were only forty-eight of them in the pound ; in the former case, the pound of sixty shillings must have contained 300 pennies, which it certainly never did. At what time this diminution of the weight and value of the shilling took place, and

how long it continued, it is impossible to discover with precision ; but there is sufficient evidence, that when the tranquillity and prosperity of the kingdom was restored under the government of Canute the Great, the shilling was restored to its former weight and value. This appears from the following law of that prince : “ He  
 “ who violates the protection of a church of the  
 “ highest order, shall pay 5 pounds by the Eng-  
 “ lish law ;—of the second order, 120 shillings ;—  
 “ of the third order, 60 shillings ;—of the lowest  
 “ order, 30 shillings \*.” In this law the mulets to be paid for violating the protection of churches, according to their dignity, arise in the same proportion from the lowest to the highest ; from which it follows, that as 30 shillings is the half of 60 shillings, and 60 shillings the half of 120 shillings ; so 120 shillings is the half of five pounds. From this law, therefore, it is evident, that when it was made, there were 240 shillings in five pounds, or 48 shillings in one pound.

The real  
 money-  
 pound of  
 the Saxons.

The above account of the Saxon money-pound is confirmed by the real weight of their pennies now remaining, which Mr Folkes found to be at a medium  $22\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains †. This made their shilling, containing five pennies, to weigh  $112\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, and their pound, containing 48 shillings, to weigh 5400 Troy grains ; which are the exact number of grains in the Tower pound ; which we may therefore conclude, was

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 127.

† Tables of Ancient Coins, p. 5.



the Anglo-Saxon money-pound. This pound they probably brought with them from the continent, as it is the same with the Colonia and Strasburgh pounds ; and it continued to be their only money-pound through the whole of this period, and even down to the reign of Henry VII. when it was changed for the Troy pound, which is 360 grains, or three-fourths of a Troy ounce, heavier\*. This small difference between the Tower pound and the Troy pound, is the reason that one pound of Anglo-Saxon money did not contain quite so much silver as three pounds of our present money, though, in general calculations, where much exactness is not necessary, we have always stated them in that proportion. Here, however, it may be proper to state the exact proportion, which is this,—

“ That one Anglo-Saxon money-pound contained as much silver as is now coined into £.2, 16s. 3d. Sterling.”

It cannot be denied that the Anglo-Saxons were acquainted with a pound which contained 15 ounces, which they used on some occasions, and for some purposes, though they did not use it in their mints. This pound is plainly mentioned in the following law of King Ethelred, preserved by Brompton, which (as I suspect) hath been the occasion of many mistakes: “ I command those who have the keeping of the ports, and the collecting of the customs on

The mercantile pound of the Anglo-Saxons.

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 99.

“ goods, that, under the pain of my displeasure, they collect my money by the pound of the market; and that each of these pounds be so regulated and stamped, as to contain 15 ounces \*.” It is evident, both from the words and the intention of this law, that the pound of 15 ounces which is mentioned in it, was not the money-pound, but the pound of the market, or the mercantile pound, by which the heavy goods of merchants were weighed when they were exported or imported, and according to which the king’s customs payable upon these goods were to be rated. This law was probably procured by the people of London, who were great friends to that unhappy king, and afforded him protection in their city, when he could not find it in any other part of his dominions. It was evidently intended to favour the merchants, and to secure them from the exactions of the customers. This distinction between the mercantile and the money-pound, was not peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons, but was in use among the Greeks, Romans, and all other trading nations, both ancient and modern †.

The mark. The mark, which is often mentioned in the laws and histories of this period, was also a denomination of money, and not a real coin; and, next to the pound, it was the highest denomination then known in England. It was not so

\* Brompton inter decem Script. p. 899.

† Clarke on Coins, p. 85.

properly an Anglo-Saxon as an Anglo-Danish denomination, having been introduced by the Danes, when they obtained a legal settlement in this island, in the reign of Alfred the Great : for it appears for the first time in the articles of agreement between Alfred and Guthrum, the Danish king \*. That the mark had its origin in Scandinavia, and was brought from thence both into France and England, is confirmed by two of the most learned antiquaries of the north †.

It would be quite improper to load the pages of a general history with a critical examination of the sentiments of different writers concerning the weight and value of the mark. It was long imagined that the mark and the mancus (which will be by and by described) were the same. This opinion seems to have arisen from the resemblance of the two barbarous Latin words *marca* and *manca* ; and was certainly a very great mistake, and the source of much perplexity and confusion. Without entering into any tedious investigations, it seems to be most probable, upon the whole,—“ That the mark bore the “ same proportion to the pound, in the period “ we are now examining, and in every succeed- “ ing period, that it doth at present, viz. that it “ was then, as it is now, two thirds of the “ weight and value of the pound.” If this con-

Weight of  
the mark.

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 47.

† Arngim Jonas Crymogææ, l. 1. c. 8. Stiernhöök de Jure Sueconum, p. 113.

jecture (for I shall call it no more) is well founded, the Anglo-Danish mark in this period must have weighed 8 Tower ounces, or 3600 Troy grains, of gold or silver; the mark of silver must have been equal in value to 160 Saxon pennies, and to 32 of the larger Saxon shillings, of 5 pennies each, and to 40 of the smaller Saxon shillings, of 4 pennies each. It must also have been equal in weight of silver to £.1:17:9 of our present money, which is exactly two thirds of £.2:16:3, the weight in silver of the Saxon pound.

The mark  
brought  
from Scan-  
dinavia.

It was very easy for the Anglo-Saxons to discover this proportion between the Danish mark and their own pound; and when they had discovered it, nothing could be more reasonable than to keep these two denominations of money in the same proportion to each other, in all their various changes, as the only means of preventing confusion in their mercantile transactions. Nor is positive historical evidence wanting, that the Danish mark, when it was brought into England, was a weight of eight ounces, according to the above account. The Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic mark (as we are told by Arngrim Jonas) weighed eight oræ or ounces of pure gold, or pure silver: and in the payment of taxes eight oræ were always paid for one mark\*. According to Stiernhöök, this was also the weight of the ancient Swedish mark: "The mark was

\* Arngrim Jonas Crymogææ, l. 1. c. 8.

“ the most ancient, the most common, and the  
 “ largest denomination of money, among all the  
 “ nations of the North. Nor was it peculiar to  
 “ them, but was known and used by the peo-  
 “ ple of Holland, Germany, France, and Eng-  
 “ land. The ancient mark of all these nations  
 “ weighed eight ounces of pure gold, or pure  
 “ silver \*.” This was the mark that was brought  
 into England by the Danes; and, after the ac-  
 cession of the Danish princes to the throne, was  
 established by law; and the mulcts that were  
 to be paid by certain criminals, which had for-  
 merly been rated in pounds, shillings, and pence,  
 were rated in marks, and their subdivisions. By  
 one of these laws, the manbote of a villan or  
 sokeman was rated at 12 oræ or ounces of silver;  
 and the manbote of a freeman (which was the  
 double of the other) was rated at 3 marks †.  
 From this law we learn, that there were 24  
 ounces of silver in 3 marks, and consequently 8  
 ounces in 1 mark. This continued to be the  
 weight of the money-mark in England as long  
 as 12 ounces continued to be the weight of the  
 money-pound ‡.

After the accession of the Danish kings to the  
 English throne, they introduced their commer-  
 cial mark, as well as their money-mark; and all  
 kinds of goods at the custom-houses, which had  
 formerly been weighed by the Saxon commer-  
 Mercantile  
 mark.

\* Stiernhöök de Jure Sueconum, p. 133.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon.

‡ Stow Chron. p. 287.

cial pound of fifteen ounces, were then weighed by the Danish commercial mark of twelve ounces. " In the reign of Canute the Great, there were " two marks, the money mark, and the mercantile mark. The money mark, by which " pure gold and pure silver were weighed, contained eight ounces; and the mercantile mark, " by which all other kinds of goods were " weighed, contained twelve ounces\*." The reader cannot fail to take notice, that the same proportion was still observed between the Danish money mark and commercial mark, as between the Saxon money pound and commercial pound, &c. &c.; the one was two-thirds of the other.

The man-  
cus.

The mancus is another species of money that is often mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons, and of all the chief European nations, in the middle ages†. It hath been much disputed, whether the mancus was a real coin, or only a denomination of money, like the pound and mark. Without giving a detail of the arguments on both sides of this question, which would be tedious, it seems to be most probable, that the mancus was a real gold coin; and that mancusses were coined by some of our Anglo-Saxon kings, as well as by the sovereigns of several other nations of Europe, in the present period. This, it must be confessed, is directly contrary to the commonly-

\* Resenius ad Jus Aulicum Canuti, p. 703.

† Du Cange Gloss, voc. Mancus.

received opinion that Henry III. was the first King of England who coined gold, A. D. 1297\*. But this opinion, though it hath long and universally prevailed, is chiefly founded on the negative argument, "That no English gold coins " of greater antiquity have yet been found:" an argument very weak and inconclusive, and now quite destroyed by the actual discovery of some Anglo-Saxon gold coins†. We have good reason, therefore, to believe the direct testimony of Aelfric, the grammarian, an Anglo-Saxon writer of eminent dignity and great learning, who expressly says,—“ That though the “ Romans had many different names for their “ coins, the English had only three names for “ theirs, viz. mancusses, shillings, and pennies‡.” That the Saxons had several names of money, besides these, as pounds and marks, we have already seen; these three, therefore, must have been the names of real coins, as distinguished from mere denominations of money. But though we have sufficient evidence in general, that gold coins, and particularly mancusses, were struck by some of our Anglo-Saxon kings, we have no information by which of these kings in particular they were coined; because there are none of those ancient mancusses yet discovered.

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 373.

† Mr Pegge's *Dissertations on some Anglo-Saxon Remains*.

‡ Aelfric Gram. Sax. p. 52. Append. Somner's *Saxon Diction*.

Weight of  
the man-  
cus.

We know with the greatest certainty what was the value of the Saxon gold mancus, and may from thence discover very nearly what was its weight. The same Archbishop Aelfric, commonly called *the Grammarian*, tells us, that there were five pennies in one shilling, and thirty pennies in one mancus\*. If, therefore, there was such a coin as a silver mancus, which is not probable, it must have weighed 675 Troy grains, equal to six Saxon shillings, to 30 Saxon pennies, to the eighth part of a Tower pound, and to 7 shillings and a small fraction of our present money. If a gold mancus was to be exchanged for silver, or the value of it paid in silver, 6 Saxon shillings, or 30 Saxon pennies, were to be given for it. If the value of any given weight of gold was to the value of an equal weight of silver, as 12 to 1, in this period, as is generally supposed, then the weight of the gold mancus must have been the twelfth part of 675 Troy grains, or 56 Troy grains, or the eighth part of a Tower ounce. This was exactly the weight of a very numerous set of gold coins, which were current in the middle ages, not only over all Europe, but in many parts of Asia and Africa, though under different names. These were the mancusses or ducats of Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and Holland, the sultani of Constantinople and the East, the chequeens of Barbary, and the sheriffs

\* Aelfric Gram. p. 52.



of Egypt, which were all of the same weight and value with the Anglo-Saxon mancus\*. This identity of the gold coins of so many different nations, is an indication that there was some commercial intercourse between them, and must have been a great conveniency to merchants.

The ora was the next species of money that The ora. is mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons; but whether it was a real coin, or only a denomination of money, still remains doubtful. This, as well as the mark, was introduced by the Danes; and the ora was in reality a subdivision of the mark. “There were only “two subdivisions,” says Stiernhöök, “of the “mark, viz. the half-mark, and the eighth part, “which was called the *ora*. Though this last is “at present unknown to the English, there is “sufficient evidence that it was in use amongst “them in ancient times, being carried from “hence into their country by the Danes. The “weight of the ora, as I have already observed, “was one ounce, or the eighth part of a “mark †.” Arngrim Jonas gives the same account of the origin, weight, or value of the ora ‡. If there was such a silver coin, therefore, as the ora, it must have weighed one Tower ounce, or 450 Troy grains, equal to 4 of the larger Saxon shillings, and to 20 Saxon pennies, and to 4s.

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 293.

† Stiernhook de Jure Sueonum, p. 134.

‡ Crymogææ, l. 1. c. 8.

8½*d.* of our present money. If there was no such coin as a silver ora, then they paid for every ora in an account, either 4 Saxon shillings, or 20 Saxon pennies. This continued to be the weight and value of the ora till after the conclusion of this period, as appears from many passages in Domesday book \*."

The Anglo-Saxon shilling a real coin.

There is hardly any species of money more frequently mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons than the shilling. It was in shillings that they estimated the mulcts and penalties inflicted by their laws on those who were guilty of certain crimes; and in shillings they fixed the wergelds, or the prices of the lives and limbs of persons of all ranks †. Payments, and the prices of commodities, were also generally rated in shillings. Notwithstanding this, it was long the universal opinion of antiquaries and historians, that the Anglo-Saxon shilling was a mere denomination of money, and not a real coin ‡. This opinion, however, which is founded only on this, that none of these shillings have been yet discovered, is quite improbable, and contrary to the plainest testimony of several Anglo-Saxon writers, who certainly knew their own coins. That of Archbishop Aelfric, already quoted, is perfectly plain, and ought to be decisive: "The English have only three names for their coins, mancusses, shillings, and

\* Scriptores xv. a Galco edit. p. 764. 766.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 45. 46.

‡ Chronicon Preciosum, p. 40.

“pennies.” In the Saxon Bible, the Jewish shekels are sometimes translated by these two words, *silver shillings*, and sometimes by the word *silverings*, and sometimes by the word *shillings*; which plainly indicates, that there was such a coin of silver as a shilling, which on some occasions was, by way of eminence, called the *silvering*, as being the largest silver coin. The name of this coin, which in Saxon is spelled *scilling*, is evidently derived from *sicilicus*, the name of a Roman coin of the same weight and value; in imitation of which the Saxon shilling was coined. The very change of the weight of the Saxon shilling from 48 out of the pound of silver to 60, already mentioned, is a proof that it was a real coin, sometimes heavier, and sometimes lighter. But whoever desires to see the arguments drawn out at full length in support of this opinion, “That the Saxon shilling was a real coin,” must consult the learned work quoted below\*.

There is no difficulty in discovering the weight and value of the Saxon shilling with the greatest certainty and exactness. When 48 of these shillings were coined out of the Tower pound of silver, weighing 5,400 Troy grains, each of them must have weighed  $112\frac{1}{2}$  of these grains, equal to 5 Saxon pennies, of  $22\frac{1}{2}$  grains each, and to 1s. 2d. of our present money. When 60 of these shillings were coined out of a Tower pound

Its weight  
and value.

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 205—229.

of silver, each of them must have weighed 90 Troy grains, equal to 4 Saxon pennies, and to  $11\frac{1}{4}d.$  of our present money.

The  
thrimsa.

The thrimsa is another species of money which is sometimes mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon laws, particularly in those of Athelstan: and hath greatly perplexed our antiquaries and historians, some of them making it equal in value to 3 Saxon shillings, and others equal only to 1 Saxon penny; while others frankly confess their ignorance of its value \*. It appears, however, very evident, from an attentive examination of the several laws in which it occurs, that the thrimsa was (as its name imports) equal in value to three Saxon pennies. It seems to have been a real coin, contrived as the most convenient subdivision between the shilling and the penny. When the shilling contained 5 Saxon pennies, the thrimsa was three-fifths of it; and when the shilling contained 4 Saxon pennies, the thrimsa, which remained unaltered, was three-fourths of it. We have examples of both these proportions in the laws of King Athelstan. In one of these laws, which was made in the beginning of his reign, when the shilling was at its primitive value of five pennies, 2000 thrimsas, the weregeld of a thane, by the law of East-Anglia, are said to be equal in value to 1200 shillings, the weregeld of a thane, by the law of Mercia; from

\* Spelman's Gloss. in voc. Thrimsa. Nicolson's Historical Library, p. 44. Brady's Hist. p. 68. Chron. Preciosum, p. 28.

whence it appears, that the thrimsa was three-fifths of the shilling \*. In another of these laws, which was made near the end of his reign, when the shilling was brought down in weight and value to 4 Saxon pennies, it is said, that the weregeld of a ceorl, by the law of East-Anglia, was 266 thrimsas, which make 200 shillings, according to the Mercian law †. From this law it appears, that the proportion between the thrimsa and the shilling was changed, and that the former was three-fourths of the latter. According to the above account, the weight of the thrimsa must have been  $67\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, equal to 3 Saxon pennies, and to  $8\frac{1}{2}d.$  of our present money; and that 80 thrimsas must have been coined out of a Tower pound of silver. The currency of the thrimsa never was universal; and it seems to have been coined only for a short time, as it was found to be unnecessary. This is the true reason why it is not mentioned among the names of the Anglo-Saxon coins by Archbishop Aelfric, as it had fallen into disuse before his time ‡.

There is no kind of money more frequently mentioned in the Anglo Saxon laws than the The Anglo-Saxon penny. pending, pening, peninga, or penny. This was by far the most common, though not (as our antiquaries long imagined) the only coin, that

\* Somner. Gloss. in voc. Thrimsa. Lye's Dictionarium Saxonicum.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 71.

‡ Clarke on Coins, p. 229—236.

was struck by the English princes of this period. The weight and value of the penny remained invariably the same through all the Saxon times, and are both perfectly well known. It was a small silver coin, of which 240 were coined out of a Tower pound of that metal, each penny weighing  $22\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, equal in weight and value to one of our present silver three-pences, all but  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grain. Any number of the other denominations of money or coins might have been paid in these pennies without a fraction, by giving 240 of them for every pound, 160 for every mark, 30 for every mancus, 20 for every ora, 5 for every larger shilling, 4 for every lesser shilling, and 3 for every thrimsa. The far greatest part of the current cash of England in this period consisted of these small silver pennies; which is the reason that so many of them are still preserved, when almost all the other Saxon coins are lost. In that great scarcity of silver that prevailed over all Europe, from the fall of the Roman empire to the discovery of America, the penny was a very proper size for the most common current coin; because it was not too large for small payments, nor too small, in sufficient numbers, for the greatest.

The sceata. The sceata, which is sometimes mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon laws, was certainly a real coin, both because its name properly signifies, a coin, or piece of money, and because it was too small for a mere denomination. The coin called *sceata*

doth not appear to have been always of the same weight and value; but seems to have been generally one of the smallest of their current coins; which gave occasion to that form of an oath, which every one who denied a debt in a court of justice was obliged to take,—“ I swear, “ by the name of the living God, that I am not “ indebted to N either shilling or sceata, or “ their worth;” *i. e.* I am not owing him either a great sum, like a shilling, which was the largest silver coin, nor a small sum, like the sceata, which was one of the smallest \*. In the laws of Ethelbright, which are the most ancient of the Anglo-Saxon laws, the sceata is often mentioned, and appears to have been a very small coin, of which twenty were equal to a shilling; and consequently it weighed only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains †. But in the laws of King Athelstan, which were made more than three centuries after the former, the sceata is evidently the same coin with the Saxon penny. For the weregeld of a king, in one of these laws, is fixed at 30,000 sceatas, which are said to be equal to 120 Saxon pounds ‡. Now, 30,000 pennies are exactly equal to 125 Saxon pounds; which shews, that if this weregeld was paid, not in actual weight, but in such a number of sceatas or pennies, by tale, then an addition of five pounds was to be paid, to make up for the deficiency of weight occasioned by the wear of these

\* Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 64.† *Id.* p. 64.‡ *Id.* p. 5. 6.

pennies. In general, therefore, we may conclude, that during the greatest part of this period, the sceata and the penny signified the same coin; and this is no doubt the reason that Archbishop Aelfric doth not mention the sceata among the names of the Anglo-Saxon coins, because it was the same with the penny\*.

The Anglo-Saxon penny valuable.

Though the Saxon silver penny or sceata was a small coin, it was of considerable value, and would then have purchased as much provisions, or goods of any kind, as five of our shillings will do at present. The price of the best sheep in England, for example, was fixed by the laws of King Athelstan, near the middle of the tenth century, at four of these pennies; for there were only four pennies in the shilling when that law was made†. By the same law, an ox was only valued at 30, a cow at 20, and a sow at 10, of these pennies.

Halfings, feorthlings, and stycas.

As it would be inconvenient, at present, to have no smaller coins than crown pieces, so it would have been equally inconvenient, in the Saxon times, to have had no coins of less value than those penny-pieces. To prevent this, they coined halfings, or halfpennies of silver, weighing 11 Troy grains, worth about three halfpence of our money; and feorthlings, or the fourth of a penny, weighing  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, worth about three farthings of our money. Both these coins are mentioned in the Saxon gospels; which is a

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 428—430.

† Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 66.



sufficient proof that they had such coins when these gospels were translated. But, after all, when many things were so very cheap, it would still have been inconvenient to have had no coin of less value than the silver farthing; and therefore they coined a brass coin of the value of half a farthing of their money, and of a farthing and a half of ours. These brass coins, which were called *stycas*, are mentioned also in the Saxon gospels; and a considerable number of them, belonging to several Northumbrian kings, have been found, and published \*.

Having thus given an account of the weight and value of the several denominations of money, and real coins, that were in use among the Anglo-Saxons in the present period, it may not be improper to place the result of the whole under the eye of the reader in the following table, that the inspection of it may enable him to discover, at one glance, the real weight and value of any sum of money he happens to meet with in the Saxon history.

Result of  
the above  
enumeration.

\* Hiccesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 182.

*Table of the names of the Anglo-Saxon denominations of money, and of real coins; with the weight of each of them in Troy grains, and value in the present money of Great Britain.*

Names.	Troy grains.	Present value.		
		£.	s.	d. q.
The pound, - -	5400	2	16	3
The mark, - - -	3600	1	17	9
The mancus of gold, - -	56	7	0	1
The mancus of silver, - -	675	7	0	1
The ora, - - -	450	4	8	1
The greater shilling, - -	112½	1	2	
The smaller shilling, - -	90		11	1
The thrimsa, - - -	67½		8	2
The penny and sceata, - -	22½		2	3
The halfling, - - -	11		1	1
The feorthling, - - -	5½			3
The styca, a brass coin, - -				1½

Foreign  
gold coins  
current in  
England.

Besides their own coins, those of all the other nations of Europe, with whom they had any commerce, were current among the Anglo-Saxons in the present period. The gold coins that were current in England, and indeed over all Europe, for some ages before the Norman conquest, were of these three kinds,—1. The old Byzantine solidi, commonly called *Byzants*;—2. The most ancient frank solidi;—3. The lesser frank solidi of twelve pence\*. Though the Byzants were coined at Constantinople, or Byzantium, from whence they derived their name, yet they were well known in England, and great

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 246.

payments were often made in Byzantines. Thus the famous St Dunstan purchased the estate of Hindon in Middlesex, of King Edgar, for 200 Byzantines\*. Out of the Greek pound of gold (which was the same with the Tower pound) 72 Byzantines were coined, each weighing 73 Troy grains, and worth 40 Saxon pennies, 8 Saxon shillings, and 9 shillings and fourpence halfpenny of our present money†. Few coins ever had a longer or more universal currency than these Byzantines, having been current from the very beginning to the end of the Eastern empire, not only in all its provinces, but also in all those countries which had been provinces of the Western empire, and, amongst others, in Britain‡. The ancient Frank solidus was the same in weight and value with the Saxon mancus, already described. The lesser Frank solidus was worth no more than twelve Saxon pennies, or two shillings and ten-pence of our present money§. It was from the use of this lesser Frank solidus that the present division of our money-pound into 20 shillings, each shilling containing 12 pence, was introduced. Besides these gold coins, there were also some foreign silver coins current in England in this period; but a more minute enumeration is unnecessary, and would be tedious.

\* Camden's Remains, p. 182.

† Leges Salicæ, tit. 47. § 4. Cod. Theod. l. 12. tit. 7. Cod. Justin. l. 10. tit. 70.

‡ Lindenbrog. Gloss. voce Solidus.

§ Clarke on Coins, p. 329.

Incrementum paid in the Saxon times.

Though coins may be of the legal weight when they are struck, they are apt to lose something of that weight by long currency. To make up this deficiency of weight occasioned by wearing, it was a custom, probably a law, among the Anglo-Saxons, when they paid a sum of money by tale, to pay one twenty-fourth part more than the nominal sum. For example, though there were only 48 Saxon shillings coined out of a pound of silver, yet when a merchant paid a debt of one pound in shillings that had been some time in the circle, he paid 50 of these shillings instead of 48. This is the reason that the same mulct or fine that is called two pounds in one law, is called one hundred shillings in another; four additional shillings being paid to make up for the presumed deficiency in weight\*. When a debt of one pound was paid in pennies, which were by far the most common coins, 250 of these pennies were paid instead of 240; which were the real number coined out of a pound. Thus the weregeld of a king is declared to be 30,000 pennies, or 120 pounds; but 30,000 pennies are really 125 pounds; because 5 pounds (or the twenty-fourth part of the whole sum) were paid to make up the deficiency of weight in the current pennies†. When any commodities are exceedingly scarce and valuable, as gold and silver were in the ages we are now examining, men are very

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 35. 38.

† Id. p. 72.

anxious not to be defrauded of the smallest part of them to which they are entitled.

As the weight is one capital consideration in the affair of coins; so their fineness, or the real proportion of pure gold, or pure silver, in them, is another. It was soon discovered, that a small mixture of some baser metal, commonly called *alloy*, with gold and silver in coins, gave them an additional hardness, and made them more durable. This therefore was admitted; but the greatest care was taken to ascertain the proportion between the pure gold or silver and the alloy, with the most minute exactness. The standard of the Anglo-Saxon money, as found by trials made upon their coins, was nine parts of pure silver, and one part of copper; and very severe penalties were inflicted by their laws on those mint-masters who made money of a baser kind. By a law of Athelstan, a monetary who coined money below the legal standard, either in weight or fineness, was to have his right hand cut off, and nailed upon the door of his mint; but by a posterior one of Ethelred, those who were guilty of this crime were to be put to death \*. All coins that were agreeable to the legal standard in these two respects, of weight and fineness, were declared by law to be the current coins of the kingdom; and none were permitted to refuse them in payments.

Though their weight and purity are the two capital considerations in the affair of coins; yet

Fineness  
of the Sax-  
on coins.

Art of  
coining.

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 59—118.

the legends and impresses which they bear, and the degrees of art and elegance with which they are fabricated, merit some attention in every period from the antiquary and historian. The art of coining money was in a very imperfect state among the Anglo-Saxons. This is evident from the inspection of their silver pennies, or the plates of them, which have been published in the works quoted below \*. These pennies are very thin; and the relievo of the letters and figures upon them very low and faint. On one side they commonly bear the prince's head by whose authority they were coined, with his name and his title in Latin (REX), and in a few instances in Saxon (CYNING). The letters are chiefly Roman with a mixture of Saxon, and for the most part very rudely formed. The reverses are various; but many of them contain only the names of the mint-master, and of the city where they were coined. For the satisfaction of such readers as have not an opportunity of viewing these coins, or the tables of them which have been published, two of the most ancient, and one of the most modern of them, are engraved on the plate of the map in the Appendix, Fig. 1, 2, 3.

Descrip-  
tion of  
Edwin's  
penny.

Fig. 1. is a penny of Edwin †, the first Christian King of Northumberland, and most probably the founder of the city of Edinburgh, who flourished

\* Camden Britan. vol. 1. Introduc. p. 165—203. Hickes. Thesaur. Dissertat. Epist. p. 161—182.

† This is controverted by Mr Pegge, Dissertation 2.

from A. D. 617. to A. D. 633. On one side is the King's head, crowned with the inscription EDPIN. REX. A. ; in which all the letters are Roman except the Saxon P (w). On the reverse is a cross in the centre (a proof that Edwin had embraced Christianity when this coin was struck), with this inscription, SEFWEL ON EOFR ; which signifies Sifwel (the name of the mint-master) at York.

The second is a penny of Adulf, who was King of the East-Angles A. D. 664. On one side is the King's head, with this inscription, AUDULFIUS PRISIN. Several explanations have been given of the last of these words, but none of them are without difficulties \*. On the reverse is a cross erected upon a globe, with a serpent hanging as lifeless on the tranverse of the cross, and this inscription, VICTURIA ADULFO.

The last is a penny of King Harold, who fell in the battle of Hastings, and was succeeded by William the Conqueror. On one side is a sceptre and the King's head crowned, with HAROLD REX ANGL. On the reverse the word PAX in the centre, and around it VLFGEAT ON GLE : which is Wlfgeat (the name of the mint-master) at Gloucester.

It is quite impossible to discover, with any degree of certainty, the quantity of current coin in England in this period. On some occasions, very considerable sums are mentioned. The

Of Adulf's  
penny.

Of Harold's  
penny.

Quantity of  
money in  
England.

\* Clarke on Coins, p. 117.

small kingdom of Kent is said to have paid to Ina King of Wessex, A. D. 694, no less than thirty thousand pounds, equal in quantity of silver to £.84,375 of our present money, and in value and efficacy to more than eight millions sterling\*. This sum is so enormous for so small a territory, that some mistake must certainly have been committed by the transcribers of the Saxon chronicle; and therefore no inference can be drawn from this passage. If a historian may be allowed to hazard a conjecture, I should suppose, that *punda* (pounds) had been inserted by a mistake instead of *peninga* (pennies), which was probably the true reading. For Ina's quarrel with the people of Kent was, that they had killed Mul, the brother of Ceadwalla, King of Wessex, his immediate predecessor; and therefore all that he could demand from them, by the established laws of the heptarchy, was the payment of the weregeld of a king, which was 30,000 pennies †. Even this sum (£.351 : 11 : 3 of our money), trifling as it may appear to us, would not be easily paid by the small kingdom of Kent, after it had been three times plundered by the West-Saxon armies in the space of eight years. Though Alfred the Great was one of the richest of our Anglo-Saxon kings, he bequeathed no more by his last will than £.500 to each of his two sons, and £.100 to each of his three daughters ‡. This was no more than £.1406 : 5 : 0

\* Chron. Saxon. p. 48.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ Testamentum *Ælfredi*, apud Asser. p. 23.



of our money to a king's son, and £.281 : 5 : 0 to a king's daughter ; a sufficient proof of the great scarcity of money in England in the age of Alfred the Great. Nor was money more plentiful in France at that time than it was in England ; for Charles the Bald, King of France, who was cotemporary with Alfred, when he meditated an expedition into Italy, A. D. 875, to seize the Imperial crown, could raise no more money in his whole kingdom than 10,000 marks, or £.18,375 Sterling\*. The cash of England seems to have increased considerably in the course of the tenth century, in the reigns of Edward the Elder, Athelstan, and Edgar the Peaceable, who were great encouragers of foreign trade. This enabled the English to pay the prodigious subsidies to the Danes in the unfortunate reign of Ethelred the Unready ; which in twenty-three years, from A. D. 991, to A. D. 1014, amounted to no less than £.167,000 of Saxon money, equal in quantity of silver to £.469,687 : 10 : 0 Sterling†. It appears, however, that they were so much exhausted and impoverished by these payments, that they were obliged to submit to the Danish yoke, as the only means of preserving themselves and their country from ruin. Upon the whole, we have good reason to believe, that there was not one fiftieth part of the cash in England, at any one time during this period which we are now de-

\* Boulainvilliers, p. 114.

† Spelman Gloss. voce Danegeld.

lineating, that is in it at present; and that this observation might be extended to almost every other country in Europe.

Whether  
the Scots,  
Picts, and  
Britons,  
coined  
money or  
not in this  
period.

As no coins of the kings of the Scots, Picts, or Welsh, who flourished in this period, have been discovered, it hath been generally believed, that none of these princes coined any money. But this is very improbable on many accounts. The low countries of Scotland, to the south of the frith of Forth, had been occupied by a colony of Saxons under Octa and Ebessa in the fifth century, and became a part of the kingdom of Northumberland about the middle of the sixth. In this state these countries continued, both inhabited by Saxons, and governed by Saxon princes, who coined money to the fall of the Northumbrian kingdom, about the beginning of the tenth century. Now, it is hardly possible, that the Scots and Picts, who were such near neighbours to the Saxons for so many ages, and had so much intercourse with them, both of a friendly and hostile nature, could remain ignorant of the use of money, and the art of coining it. At least, when the Scots kings obtained the dominion of the country between the Forth and Tweed, about the middle of the tenth century, they must have learned from their Saxon subjects the art of coining money, and must have exercised it as a part of their prerogative. This money we may be certain was not very plentiful, and therefore it hath totally disappeared. It is still more improbable, that the Britons, after they

retired into Wales, were ignorant of the use and art of coining money, when their ancestors, the provincial Britons, were so well acquainted with both. It appears evidently from many of their laws, that the Welsh princes of this period did actually coin money. By one of these laws, the coining of money is declared to be one of the four unalienable prerogatives of the kings of Wales\*: a ridiculous declaration, if it was known that no money was ever coined in Wales! The kings of England imposed a certain tribute on the kings of Wales, part of which was to be paid in money; which they never would have done, if they had known that these princes had no money of their own. The salaries of the great officers in the courts of the kings of Wales were paid in money; and the prices of all commodities were rated by the laws of Wales in money. Nay, in these laws, both gold and silver coins are directly mentioned; which is certainly a much stronger evidence that there were such coins, than the bare disappearance of them is that they never existed†. But though we have good reason to believe, from these and many other testimonies which might be produced from their laws and history, that the Welsh princes of this period did coin money; yet we have no reason to suppose that their coins were very plentiful, when those of their richer neighbours, the Anglo-Saxons, were so scarce. The smallness

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 71.† *Id.* p. 395.

of the number of these Welsh coins, the injuries of time, wars, and revolutions, and the long subjection of that country to the crown of England, are the true reasons why all these coins have disappeared; though it is not impossible that some of them may be yet discovered.

Prices of  
commodi-  
ties.

When money was so scarce in all parts of Britain, England not excepted, we may be certain that the prices of commodities in general, and particularly of such as were plentiful, would be very low. Of this we have the clearest positive evidence, in the few remaining monuments of those ancient times in which the prices of various commodities are mentioned. How amazingly low, for example, was the price of land. Some very clear evidences have already been produced, to which many more might be added, to prove, that the most common price of an acre of land, of the very best quality in the Anglo-Saxon times, was no more than sixteen Saxon pennies, or about four shillings of our money. Must it not appear incredible to us, that our ancestors, about eight or nine hundred years ago, paid as much money for four sheep, as for an acre of the best arable land? This very strange, but well-attested fact, is not only a proof of the scarcity of money and of the low state of agriculture, but seems to indicate a more scanty population in those times than is commonly imagined; for hardly any thing but a great want of people to occupy the country, could have made land of so little value in proportion to other things. By the Anglo-

Saxon laws, certain prices were set upon all animals, men themselves not excepted, which were to be paid by those who destroyed them; and these were no doubt the same prices for which such animals were usually purchased in the markets. In the laws of Ethelred the Unready, which were made near the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, are the following prices; which we shall give both in Saxon and Sterling money \*.

Price	<i>Saxon.</i>			<i>Sterling.</i>		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Of a man or slave, -	1	0	0	2	16	3
Of a horse, - -	30	0	0	1	15	2
Of a mare or colt, -	20	0	0	1	3	5
Of an ass or mule, -	12	0	0	14	1	0
Of an ox, - - -	6	0	0	7	0	$\frac{1}{2}$
Of a cow, - - -	5	4	0	5	6	0
Of a swine, - - -	1	3	0	1	10	$\frac{1}{2}$
Of a sheep, - - -	1	0	0	1	2	0
Of a goat, - - -		2	0		5	$\frac{1}{2}$

From the above table it plainly appears, that an Anglo-Saxon, in the reign of King Ethelred, could have purchased twenty horses, or mares, or mules, or oxen, or cows, or swine, or sheep, or goats, to say nothing of men, for the same quantity of silver that an Englishman must now pay for one of these animals of the middle sort. This seems to be as near as possible the true proportion between the value of money in the present times, and of those which we are now

\* Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 126.

examining, in the purchase of these most necessary and useful animals, and of all kinds of provisions, except in times of famine. In some other things, however, the proportion was very different. In the purchase of land, for example, money was several hundred times more valuable than it is at present; but in the purchase of books, it was not really of so great value as it is at this moment. So much hath the value of the former increased by the improvements of agriculture, and the increase of trade and population, and so much hath the pecuniary value of the latter decreased by the most useful inventions of paper and printing, by which books are multiplied almost *ad infinitum*. Such of our readers as desire to see a more full and minute enumeration of the prices of animals, and of all their members, in this period, (from the head of a king to the tail of a cat), may consult the work quoted below; which will suggest a thousand reflections concerning the different estimations of things, and the different tastes and desires of mankind in different circumstances \*. How much, for example, must we be surprised to see, that by the established laws of one part of this island, and most probably of the whole, the price of a hawk, or of a greyhound, was once the very same with the price of a man; and that there was a time, when the robbing a hawk's nest was as great a crime in the eye of the law, and as severely punished, as the murder of a Christian †.

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 230—279.† *Id. ibid.*

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

---

BOOK II.

CHAP. VII.

THE HISTORY OF THE MANNERS, VIRTUES, VICES, REMARKABLE CUSTOMS, LANGUAGE, DRESS, DIET, AND DIVERSIONS, OF THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS, A. D. 449. TO THE LANDING OF WILLIAM DUKE OF NORMANDY, A. D. 1066.

THE honour and happiness of nations, as well as of particular persons, depend more on their manners than on their situation and circumstances. An active, brave, intelligent, and virtuous people, cannot be contemptible in any condition, nor unhappy in any habitable climate. Such a people, if they do not change their manners, will soon improve their circumstances, and convert the most inhospitable deserts, if they are not naturally incapable of ve-

Happiness of nations depends more on their manners than on their circumstances.

getation, into pleasant and fertile fields, crowded with inhabitants, and adorned with cities, towns, and villages. We need look no further than to our own American colonies for the most agreeable and convincing evidence of the truth of this assertion. Those countries which were, not very long ago, covered with almost impenetrable forests, the haunts of wild beasts and naked savages, are now become fertile, rich, and populous provinces, and are daily improving in all these particulars. On the other hand, nations corrupted by long and great prosperity, become luxurious, effeminate, and licentious in their manners, are objects of contempt and pity in the most flourishing circumstances. Restless, peevish, and discontented, amidst the greatest affluence, insatiable in their avarice, unbounded in their ambition, they are on the brink of ruin when they seem to have attained the pinnacle of human grandeur. History affords too many examples of mighty nations, whose destruction hath been occasioned by the corruption of their manners, and who have been ruined by their own follies and vices, rather than by the arms of their enemies. For this, and many other reasons, the history of the prevailing character and reigning manners of a nation, in every period, is both the most useful and amusing part of its history, and merits the most particular attention.

People of  
Britain of  
two kinds.

Great Britain, in this period, was inhabited by several distinct nations, which formed so



many different states and kingdoms. All these nations, however, with respect to their manners, customs, languages, &c. may be divided into these two classes, viz. 1. The posterity of the ancient Britons, who were left in the peaceable possession of the whole island by the Romans at their departure; and who continued in the possession of Wales, and the far greatest part of Scotland, to the end of this period. For though these Britons were divided into different states, and unhappily engaged in war against each other, their national characters, manners, languages, &c. were very much the same.—2. The several nations who came from Germany and Scandinavia, and made conquests and procured settlements in Britain, in the course of this period. For though these nations were called by different names, as Angles, Jutes, Saxons, and Danes, they were all descended from the same origin, spoke the same language, and had the same national manners and customs.

The manners, &c. of the ancient Britons and Caledonians, the original inhabitants of this island, have been so fully delineated in the seventh chapter of the first book of this work, that it will not be necessary to give a minute detail of those of their posterity, who form the first of these two classes, in the present period. It would be impossible to do this, without repeating what hath been already said on these subjects. For the people of Wales, and of the Highlands of Scotland, the genuine descendants of the ancient

Not necessary to delineate the manners of the Scots and Welsh in this period.

Britons and Caledonians, appear to have had the same manners and national character in this as in the preceding period; and both these nations have been very remarkable for their tenacious adherence to the customs of their ancestors, through a long succession of ages. This hath been owing to their pride of their antiquity,—to their national animosity against their nearest neighbours, kept constantly alive by mutual injuries,—to the nature of their country,—and to their want of commerce, or other intercourse with foreign nations,—and [not to their want of capacity for improvement.

Manners of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons and  
Danes, the  
chief subject  
of this chap-  
ter.

This is the first opportunity we have had of examining the manners, &c. of the second of the above classes,—the nations who came from Germany and Scandinavia, and settled in Britain, in the course of this period. This must, therefore, be the chief subject of the present chapter. A curious and interesting subject, which merits a most careful and attentive investigation! For the far greatest part of the present inhabitants of England, and even of the south-east parts of Scotland, being descended from those Scandinavian and German nations, must wish to see a distinct and faithful picture of their remote ancestors, whose blood is still flowing in their veins, whom they still resemble in their persons, and from whom they derive many remarkable peculiarities in their national character and manners. In drawing this picture, a sacred regard to truth (which I have spared no pains to discover) hath

been my only guide ; and this shall be my only apology to those who think it not so fair and free from blemishes as they expected. Our Anglo-Saxon and Danish ancestors must indeed appear to great disadvantage in many respects, if they are compared with their posterity in the present age, who have been so much enlightened, improved, and polished, by the discoveries of later ages, especially since the revival of learning, and the reformation of religion. But they will very well bear a comparison with their cotemporaries in the other nations of Europe, with whom alone they ought to be compared.

We have no account of any remarkable change <sup>The climate.</sup> in the climate of Great Britain in the course of this period, (as we had in the former), that could much affect the persons or manners of its inhabitants. We hear indeed of several plagues, which raged with great violence, and swept away great numbers of men, as well as of other animals ; but these do not seem to have been more frequent, or more destructive, in this than in other periods of equal length. Famines, indeed, were both very frequent and very severe in those ages ; but these were rather owing to the imperfect state of agriculture, than to any extraordinary inclemency of the seasons.

The face of the country suffered a very great <sup>Face of the country.</sup> and fatal change after the departure of the Romans. Many fine towns, villages, and country-seats, were reduced to ruins by the incessant and destructive wars of the Scots, Picts, Saxons, and

Danes; great numbers of gardens, orchards, and well cultivated fields, had their fences broken down, and lay neglected; and the whole country, in one word, wore a dreary uncomfortable aspect during a great part of this period; which was partly the consequence, and partly the cause, of several imperfections in the characters of its inhabitants \*.

Persons of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes, who came from Germany and Scandinavia, and settled in Britain, are described by all the ancient writers who were acquainted with them, as remarkably tall, strong, and robust in their persons. This advantage they derived from their ancestors, and communicated to their posterity. For all the Greek and Roman authors who speak of the ancient Germans, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, represent them as superior to all the rest of mankind in stature †. Nor did their posterity degenerate in this respect after their settlement in this island, but still continued to be remarkable among the nations of Europe for the largeness of their limbs, and height of their stature; but still more remarkable for the elegance of their shape, the fairness of their complexions, and fineness of their hair ‡. These were the three things which attracted the notice and excited the admiration of Gregory the Great, when he beheld some English

\* *Historia Gildæ, et Epistolæ Gildæ, passim.*

† *Cæsar, l. 1. c. 39. Mela, l. 3. c. 3. Columella, l. 3. c. 8. Vegetius, l. 1. c. 1. Strabo, l. 7. p. 290.*

‡ *Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1. Alcuin. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 703.*

youths exposed to sale in the market-place at Rome. He was so much struck with the beauty of their persons, that when he was told that they were named *English* (Anglos), and that they and their countrymen were not yet converted to Christianity, he broke out into this exclamation :  
“ How lamentable is it, that the prince of darkness should have such beautiful subjects, and  
“ that a nation so amiable in their bodies should  
“ have none of the charms of divine grace in  
“ their souls ! Their form is truly angelic, and  
“ they are fit to be the companions of the angels  
“ in heaven \* ! ” We meet with several examples, in the writers of this period, of English youths preserved from death on account of the beauty of their persons, after they had been condemned by their enemies, and were on the point of being executed † ; a sufficient proof, that there must have been something uncommonly engaging in the aspect and form of these youths, which made so strong an impression on the hearts of enemies no way famous for tenderness or humanity. Their hair, as well as their complexions, were generally fair, but in various degrees ; those of the Danes, who chiefly resided in the kingdom of Northumberland, being frequently red ‡. Their eyes, which were commonly blue, are said to have had something peculiarly stern and intimidating in them when they were inflamed

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1.

† Eddius Vita Wilfredi, c. 6.

‡ Cluver. p. 96.

with anger \*. Like the ancient Germans, from whom they were descended, and to whom they bore a very great resemblance in their persons, they were more capable of bearing hunger and cold than thirst and heat †. When the persons of the males among the Anglo-Saxons were so agreeable in their form, we may be almost certain, that those of their females were still more fair and beautiful. Many evidences of this might be produced from books; but this will not be thought necessary by those who have the pleasure of conversing daily with their amiable daughters, who are not excelled in personal charms by any women in the world.

Longevity  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

As good health and long life depend very much on the natural soundness and vigour of the body, and the right configuration of its various parts, we have reason to presume, that many of the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed a great degree of health, and that some of them prolonged their lives to an uncommon date. Of this last we meet with several examples in the remaining monuments of their history, from which the following is selected as one of the most remarkable and best attested. When the famous Turketul, who had been chancellor of England, and one of the greatest warriors and statesmen of his time, retired from the world, and became abbot of Croiland, he found five very aged monks in that monastery, to whom he paid particular at-

\* Pittoulur, t. 1. p. 198.

† Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 4.

tention. Father Clarenbald, the eldest of those monks, died A. D. 973, after he had completed the 168th year of his age; the second, who was named *Father Swarling*, died that same year, at the age of 142; the third, who was called *Father Turgar*, died the year after, in the 115th year of his age. The two other monks, named *Brunc* and *Ajo*, died about the same time: and though their ages were not exactly known, yet it cannot be supposed that they were much younger than Father Turgar; because they had both seen the old Abbey of Croiland, which had been destroyed by the Danes, A. D. 870. These facts are related with much confidence, and many other circumstances, by Ingulphus, who was also abbot of Croiland, and wrote from the historical register of that abbey\*.

It is much easier to form a judgment of the bodily than of the mental endowments of any people. The former manifest themselves by mere instinct, and are visible to every eye; but the latter require much culture to unfold and render them conspicuous. We have no reason, however, to suspect, that the Anglo-Saxons were naturally defective in genius, or in any of the faculties of their minds; though the universal darkness and ignorance of those ages in which they lived, prevented the cultivation of their genius and the improvement of their faculties. Some few of them, as Aldhelm, Beda, Alcuin,

Genius of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

\* Ingulphi Hist. p. 505.

Alfred the Great, &c. were endowed with such an uncommon degree of genius, and strength of mind, that they overcame, in a great measure, all the disadvantages of their situation, and shone with a lustre far superior to their cotemporaries. It is certainly no slight presumption, that the people of England, in those times, enjoyed their full proportion of genius, that the three most learned and ingenious men that appeared in Europe in the space of six centuries were Englishmen, viz. Bede, Alcuin, and Alfred.

Anglo-Saxon authors give an unfavourable character of their countrymen.

A writer who wishes to draw an agreeable picture of the disposition, manners, and moral characters, of the Anglo-Saxons, will find very few materials for that purpose in their own cotemporary writers. This I may presume to say with some assurance, as I have perused every remaining monument of those times that I could procure, with a direct view to this object, with very little success. For though those ancient authors exceed all the bounds of truth and probability, in heaping the most extravagant praises on certain favourite saints, and a few great benefactors to the church, they are very far from giving a favourable character of their countrymen in general, especially of the laity. On the contrary, they frequently paint them in the most odious colours, and represent them as a people destitute of every virtue, and stained with every vice. To give many examples of this would be disagreeable; the following short one, translated from a Saxon sermon, preached by one of their own



bishops A. D. 1012, will be a sufficient specimen of their way of painting the manners of their countrymen. “It cannot be denied, for it is too evident, that this nation is plunged into innumerable crimes and vices; as covetousness, theft, robbery, gluttony, heathenish impurities, fornications, adulteries, incests, plottings, treacheries, treasons, lyings, perjuries, cruelties, murders, parricides.—The far greatest part of the people of this country, as I have already said, are deplorably corrupted in their manners, and become murderers, parricides, priest-killers, monastery-haters, violaters of sacred orders, false swearers, apostates, betrayers of their masters, thieves, robbers, and plunderers. Many of the women also are whores, adulteresses, child-murderers, and witches. In a word, it is impossible either to number or give names to all their wicked and flagitious deeds\*.” A horrid and shocking picture! but it is probable much more deformed than the original. For there have been ecclesiastics in all ages, who delighted to declaim with vehemence against the vices of their times and countries, and when they were heated with their favourite subject, have loaded them with every crime their imaginations could invent, without a very scrupulous regard to truth. The good Bishop Lupus, the author of the above sermon, seems to have been one of this stamp.

\* Hiccsii Dissertat. Epist. p. 104. 105.

It is a misfortune that we have no means of viewing the characters of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, but through the dark medium presented to us by bigotted and gloomy monks, who were the only writers of those times. For as those monks could perceive no vices in their patrons, who were regularly conveyed to heaven in the arms of angels; so they could discover no virtues in their opposers, who were as constantly dispatched to hell in the claws of devils; and therefore their representations of the characters, either of their friends or enemies, are far from meriting an implicit faith.

Their piety  
tintured  
with super-  
stition.

A devout regard to sacred things and the offices of religion, may be justly reckoned among the virtues of the Anglo-Saxons, after their conversion to Christianity. Of this, if it were necessary, innumerable evidences might be produced. It must, however, be confessed, that their piety was not of the purest kind, but was tintured with the absurd and wretched superstitions of the ages in which they flourished; for which they are rather to be pitied than reproached. But their submitting to the expences, pains, and labours, with which their superstitious observances were attended, is at least an evidence, that they were disposed to have been religious if they had been right instructed. It may not, therefore, be improper in this place, to take a short view of some of those things which are most remarkable in the religious principles and practices of the Anglo-Saxons.

The English, in this period, were very remarkable for their extravagant fondness for the monastic life; which was universally esteemed the surest road to heaven. This fondness for ending their days in those seats of sloth and superstition, not only prevailed among the clergy, and persons of inferior stations, but those in the highest ranks of life were so much infected with it, that no fewer than ten kings, and eleven queens, among the Anglo-Saxons, besides nobles without number, in the course of this period, abandoned the world, and retired into monasteries. This pernicious infatuation is severely censured, and bitterly lamented, by venerable Bede, as destructive to his country, by depriving it of its governors and protectors \*. But almost all the other monks and clergy acted a very different part, and employed a thousand arts to persuade kings and nobles to build and enrich monasteries. This, they assured them, was the most effectual way of obtaining the pardon of all their sins, securing the divine favour, and procuring all manner of blessings from heaven.

When Earl Alwine, who was the greatest and richest man in England in the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, consulted St Oswald, Bishop of York, what he should do to obtain the pardon of his sins; the pious prelate made him the following eloquent harangue: "I beseech your excellen-

Their fondness for the monastic life.

Arts of the clergy to persuade great men to build monasteries.

\* Bedæ Epist. ad Egbertum, p. 309. 310.

“ retired from the world, and spend their days  
“ in poverty and prayer, are the greatest fa-  
“ vourites of Heaven, and the greatest blessings  
“ to the world. It is by their merits that the  
“ divine judgments are averted and changed ;  
“ that plagues and famines are removed ; that  
“ healthful seasons and plentiful harvests are  
“ procured ; that states and kingdoms are go-  
“ verned ; that prisons are opened, captives  
“ delivered, shipwrecks prevented, the weak  
“ strengthened, and the sick healed : that I may  
“ say all in one word, it is by their merits that  
“ this world, so full of wickedness, is preserved  
“ from immediate ruin and destruction. I in-  
“ treat you, therefore, my dear son, if you have  
“ any place in your estate fit for that purpose,  
“ that you immediately build a monastery, and  
“ fill it with holy monks, whose prayers will  
“ supply all your defects, and expiate all your  
“ crimes \*.” The building of Ramsey abbey  
was the consequence of this fine speech. The  
clergy in this period constantly inculcated upon  
the rich, that the world was near an end, and  
the day of judgment at hand ; which procured  
many donations to the church, as appears from  
the charters still extant, beginning with these  
words,—“since the end of the world is at hand,”  
or words to that purpose †. What was given  
by rich men to monasteries, was represented by  
the monks as contributing greatly to the future

\* *Histeria Ramsiens*, p. 397.† *Hicksii Dissertat. Epist.* p. 77.

repose of the souls of those who gave it, and of their friends; from whence it became a common practice for all men who had any sense of religion, or concern for their salvation, to bequeath a share of their estates at least to their own souls, as it was called when they gave it to a church or monastery \*. “ King Æthelwulf,” says Asserius, “ like a wise man, made his testament in writing, and divided his estate between his soul and his children: what he gave to his children I need not mention; what he gave to his own soul was as follows,” &c. &c. The monks were at great pains to persuade rich men to become monks themselves, or to make some of their children monks, by which they gained great accessions both of wealth and credit; for when they got possession of their persons, they were certain of their estates. When they could not prevail with great men to abandon the world, during life, they persuaded them, that it would be of great benefit to their souls to have their bodies buried in a monastery near the relics of some famous saint; a privilege which could not be procured but for a very valuable consideration †. It was also a common practice in those times, for monasteries to grant to some great man one of their estates during his own life, upon condition that it should revert to the monastery at his death, accompanied by such another estate

\* Asser. Vita Ælfredi, p. 4.

† Hist. Ramsien. p. 460. Hist. Eliens. p. 470.

of his family for the good of his soul. Thus did they circumvent, by applying to their covetousness, those whom they could not delude by other means \*. In a word, there were very few in those times who had either any hopes of heaven or fears of hell, who did not leave a share of their wealth to some church or monastery. So insatiably covetous were the English clergy of this period, that they were not ashamed to boast of the most infamous impositions on the unhappy laity, as pious and meritorious actions, when they contributed to enrich the church. What extravagant praises are bestowed by the monkish writers on Ætheric, Bishop of Dorchester, in the reign of King Canute, for his dextrous management, in making a Danish nobleman drunk, and buying a fine estate from him for a mere trifle when he was in that condition ; because the holy bishop (who deserved to have been severely punished for his knavery) granted that estate to the abbey of Ramsey † ! By these, and various other means, such torrents of wealth flowed into the church in the course of this period, that before the end of it, the clergy were in possession of much more than one-third of the lands of England, besides the tithes of the whole ; and of great wealth in money, plate, and moveables of all kinds.

Fond of  
pilgrimages.

The Anglo-Saxons in this period placed much of their religion in performing pilgrimages to

\* Hist. Eliens. p. 458.

† Id. p. 441.

Jerusalem, Rome, and other places, both at home and abroad, that had obtained the reputation of extraordinary sanctity. These pilgrimages, especially to Rome, were enjoined upon sinners, as the most satisfactory penances for the greatest crimes, and recommended to saints as the most acceptable services to God. Few pious persons of any rank in those times could die in peace, or think themselves sure of heaven, till they had kissed the Pope's toe, and visited the pretended sepulchres of St Peter and St Paul at Rome. "I have been told," says Canute the Great, "that the apostle Peter had received great authority from the Lord, and carried the keys of heaven; and therefore I thought it absolutely necessary to secure his favour by a pilgrimage to Rome\*." For such reasons, kings, queens, nobles, prelates, monks, nuns, saints and sinners, wise men and fools, were impatient to undertake these religious journies; and all the roads between Rome and England were constantly crowded with English pilgrims. It appears, indeed, that the morals of these superstitious vagabonds, especially of the ladies, were not much improved by these peregrinations. Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, an Englishman, in a letter which he wrote to Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, A. D. 745, exhorts him,—"to prevent such great numbers of English nuns from going on pilgrimages to Rome; because so many of them lose their virtue

\* Spelman. Concil. Britan. t. 1. p. 535.

“ before they return, that there is hardly a city  
 “ or town in Lombardy, France, or Gaul, in  
 “ which there are not some English women who  
 “ live by prostitution, to the great reproach of  
 “ your church \*.” It is not improbable, that  
 these ladies being certain of a plenary remission  
 of all their sins when they arrived at their jour-  
 ney’s end, might think there could be no great  
 harm in adding a little to the number of them  
 by the way.

Great veneration for  
 saints and  
 relics.

An excessive veneration for saints and relics  
 was another remarkable circumstance in the reli-  
 gious principles and practices of the English of  
 this period. William of Malmsbury represents  
 it as the peculiar glory of England in the Anglo-  
 Saxon times, that it abounded more in saints and  
 relics than any other country. “ What shall I say  
 “ of all our holy bishops, hermits, and abbots?  
 “ Is not this whole country so glorious and re-  
 “ fulgent with relics, that you can hardly enter  
 “ a village of any note, without hearing of some  
 “ new saint, though the names of many of our  
 “ English saints have perished for want of writ-  
 “ ings †?” There never was a time in which  
 honours and riches were so much admired and  
 coveted, as old rags, rotten bones, and rusty  
 nails, &c. were admired and coveted by the  
 religious of this period. These were sent by  
 the greatest princes to each other as the most  
 valuable presents, preserved by churches and

\* Spelman. Concil. Britan. t. 1. p. 241.

† W. Malms. p. 57.



monasteries as their most inestimable treasures, deposited in caskets adorned with gold and precious stones, and were never viewed without being adored. “ At the death of Abbot Turketul,” says Ingulphus, “ A. D. 975, the abbey of Croiland was very rich in relics, which that holy abbot had received from Henry Emperor of Germany, Hugh King of France, Louis Prince of Aquitain, and many other dukes, earls, nobles, and prelates, when he was chancellor of England. Among these he had the greatest veneration for a thumb of the Apostle St Bartholomew, which he constantly carried about him, and with which he signed himself in all times of dangers, tempests, and thunders. This most precious relic had been presented to the Emperor by the Duke of Beneventum when he knighted him, and by the Emperor to Turketul while he was chancellor. He had also a lock of the hairs of Mary the mother of God, which the King of France had given him inclosed in a box of gold; and a bone of St Leodegarius, the bishop and martyr, which he had received from the Prince of Aquitain\*.” So great was the rage for relics in this period, especially among the clergy, that they made no scruple of being guilty of theft, robbery, or almost any crime, to get them into their possession; and when a monk had the dexterity to steal the little finger of some famous saint

\* Ingulphi Hist. p. 505.

from another monastery, he was esteemed the greatest and happiest of men among his brethren\*. If real relics could not be procured, false ones were substituted in their room, and exposed as objects of veneration to the deluded multitudes, without remorse or shame. Still further to increase their veneration for this kind of trumpery, a thousand improbable tales of miracles performed by relics were invented by the monks, and swallowed by the people without the least examination †.

Fondness  
for psalm-  
ody.

§ The public worship of the Anglo-Saxons, and of several other nations in this period, consisted chiefly in psalmody, in which both the clergy and laity took much delight. In some cathedrals and larger monasteries, this exercise was continued both night and day without intermission, by a constant succession of priests and singers, with whom the laity occasionally joined ‡. “Both the ears and minds,” says an excellent antiquary, “of the people of all ranks “ were so much charmed with this incessant melody of the monks, that it contributed not a “ little to increase their zeal and liberality in “ building monasteries.” This taste for psalmody very much increased after the introduction of organs into churches in the course of the ninth century: “whose pipes of copper,” to use the words of a writer of that age, “being winded

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 39.

† Murator. Antiq. Dissertat. 58.

‡ Id. Dissert. 56. t. 4. p. 772.

“ by bellows, and furnished with proper stops  
“ and keys, sent forth a most loud and ravishing  
“ music, that was heard at a great distance \*.”  
Even the private devotions of the good people  
of those times consisted almost entirely in singing a prodigious number of psalms, which was esteemed the most effectual means of appeasing the wrath of Heaven, and making an atonement for their own sins, or the sins of their friends, either living or dead. It was commonly an article in those voluntary associations, called *gilds* or *fraternities*, so frequent among the Anglo-Saxons, “ that each member should sing two  
“ psalms every day, one for all the members of  
“ the fraternity that were living, and the other  
“ for all that had been members, but were dead ;  
“ and that at the death of a member, each of  
“ the surviving members should sing six psalms  
“ for the repose of his soul †.” All kinds of penances might be redeemed by singing a sufficient number of psalms and *pater-nosters*. For example, if a penitent was condemned to fast a certain number of days, he might redeem as many of them as he pleased, at the rate of singing six *pater-nosters*, and the 119th Psalm six times over, for one day’s fast ‡. In a word, psalm-singing was a kind of spiritual cash in those times, and answered the same purposes in religion that money did in trade.

\* Hist. Ramsien, p. 420.

† Hiccsii Dissertat. Epist. p. 22.

‡ Johnson’s Canons, A. D. 963.

Not necessary to make this enumeration more complete.

There were many other particulars both in the religious principles and practices of the Anglo-Saxons, which would appear very singular to their posterity in the present age, though they were common to them with all the other nations of Europe in those times of ignorance and superstition. But there doth not seem to be any necessity for making this enumeration more complete. We have seen enough to convince us of the religious dispositions of our ancestors, and their sincere desires of recommending themselves to the divine favour; and to make us lament, that the means which they were taught to employ for that purpose were not more agreeable to right reason and genuine revelation.

Their love of liberty.

After the account that hath been given of the Anglo-Saxon constitution in a former chapter, it is hardly necessary to observe, that the love of political liberty, and of a free and legal form of government, may be justly reckoned among the national virtues of the English in this period. This virtue, together with the great and leading principles of their constitution, they derived from their ancestors, the ancient Germans, who are greatly celebrated by the Greek and Roman writers for their love of liberty, and their brave defence of that inestimable blessing\*. Those armies of adventurers which arrived from Germany in quest of settlements in this island, in the fifth and sixth centuries, were composed of high-

\* Pelloutier, l. 2. c. 14.

spirited and haughty warriors, who were almost equals, and would admit of no greater degrees of subordination than they chose themselves, and thought necessary to the success of their enterprises. Their conquests, we may be certain, did not abate their haughtiness, or make them more submissive to their leaders. For their own honour, after their settlement, they allowed those leaders to assume the name of kings, and gave them a large proportion of the conquered lands to support their dignity ; but they still retained in their own hands the power of making laws, imposing taxes, and determining all national questions of importance, in their national assemblies, as their ancestors had done in their native seats on the continent \*. Of these inestimable privileges they continued to be infinitely jealous, and to defend them with the most undaunted resolution ; and it is to this political jealousy and resolution of our remote ancestors, that we are indebted for our present free and legal form of government.

Martial valour was the peculiar boast and distinguishing characteristic of the ancient nations of Germany and Scandinavia. The genuine spirit and sentiments of all these nations are expressed with much energy in the following words of one of their chieftains ; “ Valour is the most  
“ glorious attribute of man, which endears him

Their valour.

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7. 11. 12.

“ to the gods, who never forsake the valiant \*.” It was this undaunted, or rather frantic valour, that enabled the northern nations to resist the Roman arms, and at length to overturn the Roman empire. Nor were any of those nations (except the Scandinavians, who were the scourge of all the countries of Europe for several centuries) more renowned for valour than the Saxons. It was the fame of their valour that engaged the unhappy Britons to apply to the Saxons for their protection against the Scots and Picts. This appears from the following expressions in the speech of their ambassadors : “ Most noble Saxons, the wretched and miserable Britons, worn out by the perpetual incursions of their enemies, having heard of the many glorious victories which you have obtained by your valour, have sent us, their humble suppliants, to implore your assistance and protection.—Formerly we lived in peace and safety under the protection of the Romans ; and next to them, knowing none more brave and powerful than you, we fly for refuge under the wings of your valour †.” The Britons were not mistaken in their high opinion of the valour and martial spirit of the Saxons ; who thereby not only repulsed the Scots and Picts, which were fierce and warlike nations, but also subdued the Britons themselves, who called them to their protection.

\* Tacit. Hist. l. 4. c. 17.

† See vol. I. p. 132.

It must, however, be confessed, that the Anglo-Saxons did not retain this part of their national character in its full vigour through the whole of this period. For after they had been some time peaceably settled in England, had embraced the Christian religion in that corrupted form in which it was presented to them, and many of them had contracted a fondness for the monastic life, they lost much of their former martial spirit, and became rather a timid than a warlike people. Venerable Bede, though he was a monk himself, and a most religious man, beheld this change in the national character of his countrymen with deep concern, and foretold the fatal consequences with which it would be attended. He called the rage of building monasteries, and embracing the monastic life, which began to prevail in his time, a most pernicious madness, which deprived the country both of soldiers and commanders to defend it from the invasions of its enemies\*. William of Malmsbury also takes notice of this change in the national character of the Anglo-Saxons: “The manners of the English have  
 “ been different in different periods. At their  
 “ arrival in Britain, they were a fierce, bold,  
 “ and warlike people; but after they had em-  
 “ braced the Christian religion, they became by  
 “ degrees more peaceful in their dispositions;  
 “ devotion was then their greatest national vir-  
 “ tue, and valour possessed only the second place

Valour of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons di-  
minished.

\* Bedæ Epist. ad Egbertum.

“ in their esteem \*.” It was this great diminution of the martial spirit of the English that made them suffer so much from the depredations of the Danes. The difference in this respect between these two nations at length became so great, that the English fled before inferior numbers of the Danes, and could hardly be prevailed upon to meet them in the field of battle on any terms. “ How long is it,” says an English author in the reign of King Ethelred the Unready, “ since the English obtained a victory over their enemies? The pirates are now become so bold and fearless, that one of them sometimes put ten, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, of us to flight. O the misery and worldly shame in which England is involved through the wrath of God! How often doth two or three troops of Danes drive the whole English army before them from sea to sea, to our eternal infamy, if we were capable of feeling shame! But, alas! so abject are we become, that we worship those who trample upon us, and load us with indignities †.” In this last expression, the reverend Bishop (for such this writer was) had probably in his eye that remarkable instance of the abject submission of the English to the insolence of the Danes, which is mentioned by other authors,—“ That when an Englishman met a Dane on a bridge, or in a narrow path, where he could

\* W. Malm's. p. 57.

† Hiccesii Dissertat. Epistol. p. 103.



“ not avoid him, he was obliged to stand still,  
 “ with his head uncovered, and in a bowing  
 “ posture, as soon as the Dane appeared, and  
 “ to remain in that posture till he was out of  
 “ sight\*.” Nay, the Bishop himself, in this  
 very sermon, gives an example of the brutal  
 insolence of the Danes, and of the spiritless  
 submission of the English, which is too indeli-  
 cate and shocking to be here inserted†. The  
 truth is, that nothing can be more difficult than  
 to keep a sufficient portion of the gallant and  
 martial spirit alive in a people softened by long  
 tranquillity, and keenly engaged in peaceful  
 pursuits of any kind: nor can any thing be  
 more dangerous than to suffer that spirit to be  
 extinguished. To this both the ancient Britons  
 and the Anglo-Saxons owed all their miseries  
 and disgraces.

The Danes, who constituted so great a pro-  
 portion of the inhabitants, and were for some  
 time the predominant people of England in this  
 period, were of as bold, fearless, and intrepid a  
 spirit, as the Saxons had ever been, and rather  
 more fierce and warlike. The histories of al-  
 most all the other nations of Europe, as well as  
 of the English, in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and  
 eleventh centuries, contain the most ample evi-

Martial  
 spirit of  
 the Danes.

\* Pontopidan. *Gesta et Vestigia Danorum extra Daniam*, t. 2. p. 139.

† Sæpenumero decem aut duodecem Dani alternis vicibus uxorem,  
 vel filiam, vel cognatam thayni vitiant, ipso thayno spectante, nec prohi-  
 bente. *Sermo Lupi Episcopi, apud Hickesii Thesaur.* t. 1. p. 103.

dences of this fact. In that period the people of Scandinavia, comprehending the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, breathed nothing but war, and were animated with a most astonishing spirit of enterprise and adventure. By their numerous fleets, they rode triumphant in all the European seas, and carried terror and desolation to the coasts of Germany, France, Spain, Italy, England, Scotland, and Ireland, to say nothing of the East, into which they also penetrated \*. The inhabitants of all these countries, especially of the sea-coasts, lived in continual apprehensions of those dreadful enemies; and it made a part of their daily prayers to be preserved by Providence from their destructive visits †.

Causes of  
the martial  
spirit of the  
Danes.

Many things contributed to kindle this love, or rather rage, for war and martial achievements in the bosoms of the Scandinavians, in this period. They were Pagans; and those who were the objects of their worship had been famous warriors, whose favour, they imagined, could only be obtained by brave exploits in war. Their admission into the hall of Odin, (the father of slaughter, the god of fire and desolation), and all their future happiness, they were taught to believe, depended on the violence of their own death, and on the number of their

\* Pontopidani Gesta et Vestigia Danorum extra Daniam, 3 tom. 8vo. Lipsiæ et Hafniæ, A. D. 1741.

† It was a petition in the Litany of those times,—“A furore Norman-  
“ norum libera nos Domine.”

enemies which they had slain in battle \*. This belief inspired them with a contempt of life, a fondness for a violent death, and a thirst for blood, which are happily unknown and appear incredible in the present times †. Their education was no less martial in its spirit and tendency than their religion. Many of them were born in fleets or camps; and the first objects on which they fixed their eyes were arms, storms, battles, blood, and slaughter. Nursed and brought up in the midst of these terrible objects, they by degrees became familiar, and at length delightful. Their childhood and their dawn of youth were wholly spent in running, leaping, climbing, swimming, wrestling, boxing, fighting, and such exercises as hardened both their souls and bodies, and disposed and fitted them for the toils of war. As soon as they began to lisp, they were taught to sing the exploits and victories of their ancestors; their memories were stored with nothing but tales of warlike and piratical expeditions, of defeating their enemies, burning cities, plundering provinces, and of the wealth and glory acquired by brave exploits. With such an education, it was no wonder that their youthful hearts soon began to beat high with martial ardour; and they early became impa-

\* Northern Antiq. t. i. c. 6.

† ——— Certe populi, quos despicit Aretos,  
 Felices errore suo! quos ille, timorum  
 Maximus, haud urget lethi metus: inde ruendi  
 In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces  
 Mortis, et ignavum reditura parcere vitæ.

*Lucan, l. 1.*

tient to grasp the sword and spear, and to mingle with their fathers, brothers, and companions, in the bloody conflict. This they also knew was the only road to riches, honours, the smiles of the fair, and every thing that was desirable. To all these motives to martial and piratical expeditions, arising from religion and education, another still more powerful, if possible, was added. This was necessity, occasioned by the barren uncultivated state of their country;—which obliged them to seek for those provisions by piracy and plunder abroad, which they could not find at home. The situation of their country also, consisting of islands, and of a great extent of sea-coast on the continent, naturally led them to the study of maritime affairs, which have a direct tendency to make men hardy and courageous, familiar with toils and dangers. All these motives co-operating, (which perhaps may never be again united), rendered the Danes of the middle ages a most fearless, undaunted, and warlike people, and gave their courage some remarkable properties, which merit a little of our attention.

Properties  
of the mar-  
tial spirit of  
the Danes.

The valour of the Danes was boastful and audacious, attended with much presumption and self-confidence. This appeared by a degree of boldness and daring in their words and actions, which to other nations would have seemed the greatest rashness. It was one of their martial laws,—“That a Dane who wished to acquire  
“the character of a brave man, should always

“attack two enemies, stand firm and receive the attack of three, retire only one pace from four, and fly from no fewer than five \*.”—

The histories of those times are full of examples of the most bold, desperate, and often successful darings of the Danes; of which none is better attested, or more extraordinary, than the following one, which is related by many of our own writers. A bloody and obstinate battle was fought near Stamford, 24th October, A. D. 1066, between Harold King of England and Harald Harefager King of Norway, in which the Norwegians were at length obliged to retire, and the English began to pursue with great eagerness. But a total stop was put to their pursuit for several hours by the desperate boldness of a single man. This was a Dane of a gigantic stature, enormous strength, and undaunted courage; who taking his station on Stamford bridge, killed no fewer than forty of the pursuers with his battle-axe, and was not killed at last but by a stratagem †. This high presumptuous spirit of the Danes made them violent, vindictive, and impatient of the least affront, or (in modern language) men of strict and jealous honour. To call a Dane a *nothing*, was like setting fire to gunpowder, and instantly excited such a flame of rage, as nothing but his own blood or the blood of the offender could extinguish ‡. By

\* Bartholin. *Causæ Contemptæ a Danis Mortis*, c. 7.

† W. Malm. in *Harold*. Brompton. p. 958.

‡ Bartholin. c. 7. *Northern Antiq.* c. 9.

this means duels and single combats were as frequent and bloody, and fought on almost as trifling occasions, among the barbarous and Pagan Danes, as they are among the politest Christians of the present age. It was the same spirit that rendered the Danes of this period intolerably haughty and insolent to those whom they had subdued, and made them exact the most humiliating tokens of submission from them. Some examples of the insolence of the Danes to the English, while they were under their dominion, have been already given; to which several others might be added; but the following one will be sufficient to convince the reader, that it was carried to the most capricious height. If an Englishman presumed to drink in the presence of a Dane, without his express permission, it was esteemed so great a mark of disrespect, that nothing but his instant death could expiate. Nay, the English were so intimidated, that they would not adventure to drink, even when they were invited, until the Danes had pledged their honour for their safety; which introduced the custom of pledging each other in drinking; of which some vestiges are still remaining among the common people in the north of England, where the Danes were most predominant \*. This insolence of the Danes made so deep an impression on the imaginations of the English, and was painted by them to their posterity in such

\* Pontopidan. *Gesta et Vestigia Danorum*, t. 2. p. 209.

lively colours, that for several ages after, a proud imperious tyrant was called a *Lord Dane* \*.

The martial spirit of the Pagan Danes was attended with a most prodigious prodigality of life, and fondness for a violent death. The many strange accounts that are given of this in their ancient histories would appear incredible, if they were not so well attested. On receiving mortal wounds in battle, they were so far from uttering groans and lamentations, or exhibiting any marks of fear or sorrow, that they commonly began to laugh and sing †. These expressions of joy at the approach of a violent death, which were sincere and unaffected, proceeded from the native and acquired boldness of their ferocious spirits, —from their ardent love of military fame,—and from the thoughts of those endless scenes of fighting, feasting, and carousing, which they expected in the hall of Odin ‡. The surviving friends of those who fell in battle, after having fought bravely, and killed a number of their enemies, were so far from bewailing their fate, that they rejoiced in their death, as an event equally happy to themselves and honourable to their family. The famous Siward, a Danish Earl of Northumberland, being told that his favourite son was killed in a battle against the Scots, asked, with much anxiety, whether his wounds were behind or before? and being answered that they

Fondness of  
the Danes  
for a violent  
death.

\* Fabian Chron. c. 198.

† Bartholin. c. 1. 2.

‡ Id. *ibid.* l. 2. c. 11.

were all before, he cried out, in a transport of joy, " Now I am perfectly happy ! that was a " death worthy of me and my son \*." Those Danish warriors who had courted a violent death in many battles, and had been so unfortunate as not to find it, became unhappy and discontented at the approach of old age, full of the most dreadful apprehensions that they should die of some disease, and thereby be excluded from the society of heroes in the hall of Odin. To prevent this, they either persuaded some of their friends to dispatch them, or put a violent end to their own lives †. Starcather, a celebrated Danish captain, who had spent his whole life in arms and combats, was so unfortunate as not to meet with any person who had strength and courage enough to beat out his brains. As soon as he observed his sight begin to fail, he became very disconsolate, and apprehensive that he should be so unhappy as to die in his bed. To avoid so great a calamity, he put a gold chain of considerable value about his neck, which he declared he would bestow upon the first brave man he could meet with, who would do him the favour to cut off his head : nor was it long before he met with one who did him that friendly office, and won his chain ‡. Even after the Danes embraced the Christian religion, and were thereby deprived of the religious motives to prefer a violent death, their warriors continued for some

\* Hen. Hunt. l. 6. c. 24.

† Bartholin. l. 1. c. 4.

‡ Id. *ibid.*



time to esteem that the most desirable kind of exit, and to abhor the thoughts of dying of lingering diseases, and in their beds. Earl Siward, already mentioned (who was as good a Christian as any Dane could be, who had spent his whole life in scenes of slaughter), being seized with a dysentery in his old age, and sensible that his end was drawing near, felt much uneasiness about the manner of his death, of which he was quite ashamed: "Alas!" said he, "that I have escaped death in so many battles, to yield up my life in this tame disgraceful manner, like a cow! I beseech you, my dear friends, dress me in my impenetrable coat of mail, gird my trusty sword about my body, place my helmet on my head, my shield in my left hand, and my gilded battle-axe in my right, that I may die in the dress at least of a warrior, since I cannot have the happiness to die in battle." All this was done, and he expired with some degree of honour and satisfaction\*. Christianity, however, by degrees abated this unnatural furious spirit of the Danes, made them less prodigal of life, and less fond of a violent death, to their own advantage, and the repose of the rest of mankind.

The martial spirit of the Pagan Danes exerted and spent itself chiefly in piratical expeditions; to which they were exceedingly and universally addicted. This was owing to the situation of

Fondness  
for piratical  
expeditions.

\* Bartholin. l. 1. c. 4. Hen. Hunt. l. 6. c. 26.

their country, and the ordinary progress of society from the pastoral to the predatory life. For nations are first hunters, then shepherds; and when their numbers are too much increased to live by these employments, they next become robbers or pirates for some time, before they commence husbandmen and manufacturers. Thus much at least is certain, that the Danes were so universally a people of pirates, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, that a Dane and a pirate were synonymous terms in the languages of several nations, and particularly in that of the Anglo-Saxons\*. In those times all the men of Denmark constantly wore the dress of sailors, and there were sometimes greater numbers of Danes actually at sea than on shore†. All these were engaged in piracy; which was pursued, not only by persons of inferior rank, but by kings, princes, and nobles, as the most honourable of all professions‡. Some of these pirates acquired so much wealth and fame, and had such numerous fleets at their command, that they were called *sea-kings*; and though they were not masters of one foot of land, made the greatest nations and most powerful monarchs tremble||. “Helghi,” says an ancient historian, “was a hero of invincible strength and valour, and spent his whole life in piracy. He plundered and depopulated the coasts of all the surround-

\* Chron. Saxon. passim.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

† Northern Antiquit. t. 1. c. 10.

|| Bartholin. l. 2. c. 9.

“ing countries, by his fleets, and justly acquired the honourable title of a *sea-king* \*.” The introduction of Christianity by degrees abated the violence, and at length abolished the practice of piracy among the Danes, both of England and Scandinavia: for both the laws and actions of the Christian pirates of this period were humane and gentle, in comparison of those of their Pagan predecessors †.”

The most pernicious property of the martial spirit of the Pagan Danes was its cruelty; which prompted them to many deeds of horror, and made them the dread and detestation of other nations. These cruelties of the Danes are painted in the strongest colours by our most ancient historians, who lived in or nearest to those times. “The cruel Guthrum,” says one of these historians, “arrived in England A. D. 878, at the head of an army of Pagan Danes, no less cruel than himself, who, like inhuman savages, destroyed all before them with fire and sword, involving cities, towns, and villages, with their inhabitants, in devouring flames; and cutting those in pieces with their battle-axes who attempted to escape from their burning houses. The tears, cries, and lamentations of men, women, and children, made no impressions on their unrelenting hearts; even the most tempting bribes, and the humblest offers of becoming their slaves, had no effect. All the

Cruelty of  
the Danes.

\* Sueno Agonis Hist. Den. c. 1.

† Bartholin. p. 2. c. 9.

“ towns through which they passed exhibited  
“ the most deplorable scenes of misery and deso-  
“ lation ; as, venerable old men lying with their  
“ throats cut before their own doors ; the streets  
“ covered with the bodies of young men and  
“ children, without heads, legs, or arms ; and of  
“ matrons and virgins, who had been first pub-  
“ licly dishonoured, and then put to death\*.”

It is said to have been a common pastime among these barbarians, to tear the infants of the English from the breasts of their mothers, toss them up into the air, and catch them on the point of their spears as they were falling down †. One Oliver, a famous pirate of those times, was much celebrated for his humanity, and acquired the surname of *Barnakall*, or *child-preserver* ; because he denied his followers this diversion of tossing infants on their spears ‡. Even after the Danes and Anglo-Saxons had embraced the Christian religion, they long retained too great a tincture of their former ferocity. It is a sufficient proof of this, that the horrid operation of scalping, esteemed cruel in the savages of North America, was occasionally performed by these nations on their enemies towards the end of this period. “ Earl Godwin,” says an ancient historian, “ in-  
“ tercepted Prince Alfred, the brother of Ed-  
“ ward the Confessor, at Gildford, in his way to  
“ London, seized his person, and defeated his

\* J. Wallingford, apud Gale, t. 1. p. 536.

† Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 135.

‡ Bartholin. l. 2. c. 9. p. 457.

“ guards; some of which he imprisoned, some  
 “ he sold for slaves, some he blinded by pulling  
 “ out their eyes, some he maimed by cutting  
 “ off their hands and feet, some he tortured by  
 “ pulling off the skin of their heads, and, by  
 “ various torments, put about six hundred men  
 “ to death \*.”

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes were of a so-  
 cial disposition, and delighted much in forming  
 themselves into fraternities and gilds of various  
 kinds, which were cemented by frequent convi-  
 vial meetings and computations. By the laws  
 of the Anglo-Saxons, every freeman who was  
 the head of a family, was obliged to be a mem-  
 ber of the decennary or neighbourship in which  
 he dwelt; and all the members of the neigh-  
 bourship were pledges for each others good be-  
 haviour to the public. This created a connec-  
 tion between them, and gave them an interest  
 in each others concerns, quite unknown in the  
 present times; and these ties of union were  
 greatly strengthened by their eating and drink-  
 ing together at the common table of the neigh-  
 bourship †. Besides those legal societies, many  
 voluntary ones were formed between persons of  
 similar tempers, inclinations, and ways of life,  
 for their mutual safety, comfort, and advantage.  
 Some of these voluntary fraternities or *sodolitia*  
 were composed of ecclesiastics, and some of lay-  
 men, and some of both clergy and laity; and

So-  
cial dis-  
position of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons and  
Danes.

\* Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, l. 2. c. 32.

† Johnson's Canons, A. D. 693, c. 6.

the statutes of all these different kinds are still extant, and have been published\*. From these statutes, especially of the lay fraternities, it appears, that one great object of them was, to promote good fellowship and frequent festive meetings among their members; for the forfeitures are generally appointed to be paid in honey and malt, to be made into mead and ale for the entertainment of the fraternity†. These convivial assemblies, in which the Anglo-Saxons and Danes delighted so much, were productive of some good effects, and contributed to strengthen the ties of friendship, and restrain their natural ferocity within some decent bounds; very severe fines being imposed on those who were guilty of giving offensive language to any member of the fraternity at the common table, or neglected to perform any of those friendly offices which were required by their statutes‡. On the other hand, it cannot be denied, that the frequent festive meetings of these fraternities contributed very much to increase their vicious habits of excessive drinking, to which they were too much addicted. The very laws that were made by some of these fraternities to restrain excesses of this kind, are a sufficient proof that they were allowed to go considerable lengths in this way, without incurring any blame; for these laws were made only against

\* Hiccesii Epist. Dissertat. p. 20. 21. 22.

† Id. *ibid.* Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 16.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

such shameful degrees of intoxication as are not to be named \*.

Both the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, and all the other nations of Europe in this dark period, were credulous to a degree that is quite astonishing. This is evident from every remaining monument of their history. What prodigious numbers of miracles do we meet with in every monkish chronicle; and how ridiculous are many of these miracles! The following one, which is related with much solemnity, as a most unquestionable fact, by William of Malmsbury, the most sensible of our ancient historians, may serve as a specimen of these monkish miracles, though others still more ridiculous might be produced. This miracle Malmsbury relates in the following manner, in the very words, as he says, of one of the persons on whom it was wrought: “ I Ethelbert, a sinner, will give a true relation of what happened to me on the day before Christmas, A. D. 1012, in a certain village where there was a church dedicated to St Magnus the martyr, that all men may know the danger of disobeying the commands of a priest. Fifteen young women, and eighteen young men, of which I was one, were dancing and singing in the church-yard, when one Robert, a priest, was performing mass in the church; who sent us a civil message, intreating us to desist from our diversion, because we disturbed his devo-

Credulity  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons and  
Danes.

\* Bartholin. de Causis Contemptæ apud Danos Mortis, c. 8.

“ tion by our noise. But we impiously disre-  
“ garded his request; upon which the holy  
“ man, inflamed with anger, prayed to God and  
“ St Magnus, that we might continue dancing  
“ and singing a whole year without intermis-  
“ sion. His prayers were heard. A young  
“ man, the son of a priest, named John, took  
“ his sister, who was singing with us, by the  
“ hand, and her arm dropped from her body  
“ without one drop of blood following. But  
“ notwithstanding this disaster, she continued  
“ to dance and sing with us a whole year.  
“ During all that time we felt no inconveniency  
“ from rain, cold, heat, hunger, thirst, or wear-  
“ ness, and neither our shoes nor our clothes  
“ wore out. Whenever it began to rain, a mag-  
“ nificent house was erected over us by the  
“ power of the Almighty. By our continual  
“ dancing we wore the earth so much, that by  
“ degrees we sunk into it up to the knees, and at  
“ length up to the middle. When the year was  
“ ended, Bishop Hubert came to the place, dis-  
“ solved the invisible ties by which our hands  
“ had been so long united, absolved us, and re-  
“ conciled us to St Magnus. The priest’s daugh-  
“ ter, who had lost her arm, and other two of the  
“ young women, died away immediately; but  
“ all the rest fell into a profound sleep, in which  
“ they continued three days and three nights;  
“ after which they arose, and went up and down  
“ the world publishing this true and glorious  
“ miracle, and carrying the evidences of its



“ truth along with them, in the continual shaking of their limbs \*.” A formal deed, relating the particulars, and attesting the truth of this ridiculous story, was drawn up and subscribed by Bishop Peregrine, the successor of Hubert, A. D. 1013; and we may be certain, that a fact so well attested was universally believed. Many of the monkish miracles in this period were as trifling as they were ridiculous, and pretended to be wrought for the most frivolous purposes. As the famous St Dunstan was one day celebrating mass, a dove came down from heaven, and hovered over his head, which so much engaged the attention of all the people and clergy, that none of them had the presence of mind to assist the saint in putting off his pontifical robes when mass was ended. He therefore put them off himself; but instead of falling to the ground they hung suspended in the air, that the pious meditations of the holy man might not be disturbed by their noise in falling †. Not a few of the miracles that were published by the monks, and believed by the people, of this period, were of the most pernicious and hurtful nature; especially those that were wrought by the Welsh saints, who were represented as more touchy and passionate than any other saints, even after they were in heaven ‡. Many other evidences might be produced, if it were necessary, of the extreme

\* W. Malms. p. 38. l. 2. c. 10.

† Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 77.

‡ Girald. Cambrens. Itinerar. Cambriæ, l. 2. c. 7.

credulity of the people of England, and of all the other countries of Europe, besides this of believing the most absurd tales of ridiculous, frivolous, and pernicious miracles; for they received with equal readiness the no less monstrous relations of the monks concerning visions, ghosts, revelations, and enchantments. In a word, it seems to have been impossible for the priests of this period to invent any thing that the people would not believe upon their word.

Curiosity of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons and  
Danes.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes were as curious as they were credulous, and were at much expence and pains to penetrate into futurity, to discover what was to befall them, and what would be the issue of their various undertakings. This made them the dupes of those wretches who pretended to be skilful in the arts of fortune-telling and divination, who were courted, caressed, and rewarded, by the greatest princes, as well as by the common people. These admired magicians and fortune-tellers were commonly old women; for whom the Anglo-Saxons, as well as their ancestors the ancient Germans, entertained a very great veneration, and in whom they imagined something divine resided \*. As the Danes were more ignorant, and continued longer Pagans than the English; so they were still greater dupes to those wrinkled dispensers of good and bad fortune, who travelled with the retinue and state of queens, and were every where treated with

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 8.

the highest respect. One of them is thus described in an ancient Danish history : “ There was a certain old woman named *Heida*, who was famous for her skill in divination and the arts of magic, who frequented public entertainments, predicting what kind of weather would be the year after, and telling men and women their fortunes. She was constantly attended by thirty men servants, and waited upon by fifteen young maidens\*.” Princes and great men, when they invited these venerable hags to their houses, to consult them about the success of their designs, the fortunes of themselves and children, or any future event which they desired to know, made great preparations for their honourable reception, and entertained them in the most respectful manner. This and several other curious particulars, relating to the manners of those times, appear from the following genuine description of one of these interviews : “ There was in the same country an old woman named *Thorbiorga*, the only survivor of nine sisters, fortune-tellers, who was very famous for her knowledge of futurity, and frequented public entertainments for the exercise of her art when she was invited. Earl Thorchill, who had the greatest authority in that country, and was most desirous to know when the famine and sickness, which then raged, would come to an end, sent messen-

\* Bartholin. l. 3. c. 4. p. 688.

gers to invite Thorbiorga to his house, after he had made all the preparations which were usual for the reception of such an honourable guest. In particular, a seat was prepared for the prophetess, raised some steps above the other seats, and covered with a cushion stuffed with hens feathers. When she arrived on an evening, conducted by the messengers, she was dressed in a gown of green cloth, buttoned from top to bottom; had a string of glass beads about her neck, and her head covered with the skin of a black lamb, lined with the skin of a white cat: her shoes were made of a calf's skin, with the hair on it, tied with thongs, and fastened with brass buttons; on her hands she had a pair of gloves of a white cat's skin, with the fur inward: about her waist she wore a Hunlandic girdle, at which hung a bag, containing her magical instruments; and she supported her feeble limbs by leaning on a staff adorned with many knobs of brass. As soon as she entered the hall, the whole company arose, as it became them, and saluted her in a most respectful manner; which she returned as she thought proper. Earl Thorchill then advanced, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the seat prepared for her. After some time spent in conversation, a table was set before her, covered with many dishes; but she eat only of a pottage of goat's milk, and of a dish which consisted of the hearts of various animals. When

“ the table was removed, Thorchill humbly  
“ approached the prophetess, and asked her  
“ what she thought of his house, and of his  
“ family; and when she would be pleased to  
“ tell them what they desired to know. To  
“ this she replied, that she would tell them no-  
“ thing that evening, but would satisfy them  
“ fully next day. Accordingly, on the day af-  
“ ter, when she had put all her implements of  
“ divination in proper order, she commanded a  
“ maiden, named *Godreda*, to sing the magical  
“ song called *Vardlokur*; which she did with  
“ so clear and sweet a voice, that the whole  
“ company were ravished with her music, and  
“ none so much as the prophetess, who cried  
“ out, Now I know many things concerning  
“ this famine and sickness, which I did not  
“ know before. This famine will be of short  
“ continuance, and plenty will return with the  
“ next season, which will be favourable; and  
“ the sickness also will shortly fly away. As  
“ for you, my lovely maid *Godreda*, you shall  
“ be married to a nobleman of the highest rank,  
“ and become the happy mother of a numerous  
“ and flourishing family. After this the whole  
“ company approached the prophetess one by  
“ one, and asked her what questions they pleas-  
“ ed; and she told them every thing that they  
“ desired to know \*.” What a striking picture  
is this, of the most eager curiosity and unsus-

\* Brin's *Rauga Saga*, apud Bartholin, p. 691.

pecting simplicity on the one hand, and of the most consummate cunning on the other. After the Anglo-Saxons and Danes embraced the Christian religion, their veneration for the persons, and confidence in the predictions, of these impostors, gradually diminished; for the Christian clergy were commanded by the canons, “to preach very frequently against diviners, sorcerers, auguries, omens, charms, incantations, and all the filth of the wicked, and dotages of the Gentiles\*.” By the laws of the church very heavy penances, and by the laws of the state very severe punishments, were inflicted both on those who practised those delusive arts, and on those who consulted them †.

Hospitality  
of the An-  
glo-Saxons.

Hospitality may be justly reckoned among the national virtues of the Anglo-Saxons. This virtue they derived from their ancestors, the ancient Germans: “For in social entertainments and hospitality, no nation was ever more liberal. They received all comers without exception into their houses, and entertained them in the best manner their circumstances could afford. When all their provisions were consumed, they conducted their guests to the next house, without any invitation, where they were received with the same frankness, and entertained with the same generosity ‡.” After the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to

\* Johnson's Canons, A. D. 747. c. 3.

† Spelman. Concil. t. 1. p. 294—515.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 21.

Christianity, their natural dispositions to hospitality were encouraged and strengthened by religious motives; for the Anglo-Saxon clergy were commanded by the canons to practise hospitality themselves, and to recommend the practice of it very frequently and earnestly to their people \*. The English kings, in this period, spent a considerable portion of their revenues in entertaining strangers, and their own nobility and clergy, particularly at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide †. The English nobility, in imitation of their princes, consumed the greatest part of their large estates in a rude abundant kind of hospitality; of which all who thought proper were welcome to partake‡. Monasteries, in those times, were a kind of public-houses, where travellers and strangers of all ranks were lodged and entertained:

Chastity in their youth, and conjugal fidelity after marriage, may also be numbered among the national virtues of the Anglo-Saxons. Their ancestors, the ancient Germans, were famous for both these virtues. “The intercourse between  
“the sexes among them did not commence till  
“both had arrived at full maturity of age and  
“strength. The laws of matrimony were observed with great strictness. Examples of adultery were extremely rare, and punished  
“with much severity. The husband of an adul-

Their chastity and conjugal fidelity.

\* Spelman. Concil. t. 1. p. 276. 601.

† Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 199.

‡ W. Malms. p. 58.

"teress, in the presence of her relations, cut off  
 "her hair, stripped her almost naked, turned her  
 "out of his house, and whipped her from one  
 "end of the village to the other. A woman  
 "who had been thus exposed, never recovered  
 "her character; and neither youth, beauty, nor  
 "riches, could ever procure her another hus-  
 "band\*." The Anglo-Saxons were much con-  
 firmed in these virtues, which they derived from  
 their ancestors, by the precepts of Christianity,  
 after they embraced that religion. It cannot,  
 however, be denied, that the imprudent zeal  
 of the Christian clergy, in attempting to carry  
 this virtue to a greater height than the laws of  
 nature, and the good of society, will admit, had  
 a very bad effect on the manners of the people,  
 especially of the ecclesiastics, in this respect.  
 By endeavouring to preserve virginity, they  
 destroyed chastity, and gave birth to many un-  
 natural vices, which must not be mentioned†.  
 The Danish soldiers, who were quartered upon  
 the English in the reigns of Athelstan and sever-  
 al of his successors, being idle, insolent, and  
 debauched, corrupted many of the English wo-  
 men, both married and unmarried, by dressing  
 better than the Englishmen, and by other arts‡.  
 By these and some other means, this virtue declin-  
 ed so much among the people of England, that  
 before the end of this period very few vestiges of

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 18. 19. 20.

† Vide Wilkensis Concilia, t. 1. p. 118. &c.

‡ Chron. Wallingford, apud Gale, t. 1. p. 547.



their ancient innocence and modesty remained; and this dissolution of manners is represented, both by the historians and divines of those times, as one of the chief causes of their ruin \*.

The Anglo-Saxons, as well as their ancestors the ancient Germans, were remarkable for the warmth of their affections to their family and relations †. But these affections, which are so amiable when kept within due bounds, were by them carried to excess; and every family or clan formed a kind of combination, which adopted all the passions, and prosecuted all the quarrels, of its particular members, however unjust and lawless, not against the offender only, but against his whole family. This gave occasion to family feuds and bickerings, which were attended with manifold inconveniencies. To restrain these private wars between great families, which disturbed the public tranquillity, and prevented the regular course of justice, many laws were made, particularly by King Edmund, who reigned from A. D. 940, to A. D. 946 ‡. By one of these laws it is declared, that a murderer shall alone be obnoxious to the resentment of the relations of him whom he had murdered, and not his whole family, as formerly; and that if any of these relations take vengeance on any other than the murderer, he shall forfeit all his goods, and

\* W. Malms. p. 58. *Sermo Lupi*, apud Hiccesii *Dissertat. Epist.* p. 102.

† Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 21.

‡ Wilkins *Leges Saxonice*, p. 73.

be prosecuted as an enemy to the king and all his friends. By another, a method is settled for compromising all disputes between the family of the murderer and that of the person killed, in an amicable manner. These and other laws, together with the great calamities which befel the English in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, and destroyed many noble families, so much relaxed the ties of blood, that Bishop Lupus, who flourished towards the end of that unhappy reign, complains,—“ That in his time relations  
 “ had little more attachment to one another  
 “ than to strangers; and that the natural affection of parents to children, and of children to  
 “ parents, and of brothers to each other, was  
 “ very much diminished \*.” So much did the manners of the English change in this particular in the course of this period!

Vices of the  
Anglo-Sax-  
ons.

The English reader, it is hoped, will not be much offended, though he is not presented in this place with a very minute detail of the vices of his ancestors. There seems to be no necessity for this; and as it is an unpleasant subject, it shall be dispatched in as few words as possible.

Frequent  
murders.

We have good reason to believe, that bloodshed and murder were very frequent among a people so brave, fierce, and passionate, as the Anglo-Saxons and Danes; especially when we consider that they were always armed; and that a certain price was set upon the limbs and lives

\* Sermo Lupi, apud Hiccesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 101.

of all the members of society, from the sovereign to the slave \*.

The great propensity of the Saxons, and the Theft. still greater propensity of the Danes, to piracy, hath been already mentioned. Both these nations were also much addicted to theft and robbery. This appears from every part of their history, and is evident from all their laws, which contain a prodigious number of regulations for preventing or punishing these crimes †.

The prodigious multiplicity of oaths among Perjury. the Anglo-Saxons greatly diminished their solemnity, and gave occasion to much perjury; which is represented by their own writers as one of their national vices ‡. This multiplicity of oaths in criminal causes was owing to the great number of compurgators required by law, which in some cases amounted to forty or fifty. In civil causes, each party endeavoured to bring as great a number of witnesses as possible into the field, which were drawn up like two little armies, consisting sometimes of a thousand on one side ||.

Bribing judges, and even kings, to influence Bribery. them in their decisions of law-suits, seems to have been a very common practice among the Anglo-Saxons in this period, especially towards

\* Sermo Lupi, apud Hiccesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 101.

† Wilkins Leges Saxonicae, passim.

‡ Hiccesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 104. 105.

|| Historia Eliensis, c. 35.

its conclusion. Many of these infamous transactions are related by our ancient historians as common occurrences, without the least mark of surprise or disapprobation \*. Nay, Edward the Confessor, notwithstanding all his boasted sanctity, is not ashamed to mention (in an award of his which is still extant) a handsome bribe which he had received from one of the parties, as one of the grounds of his decision †.

Tyranny  
and oppres-  
sion.

Tyranny, cruelty, and oppression of their inferiors, were prevailing vices of the great men among the Danes and Anglo-Saxons towards the end of this period, when a kind of aristocracy had taken place. “The poor and indigent are circumvented and cruelly treated; nay, their own persons, and those of their children, are often seized by force, and sold for slaves. Widows are unjustly compelled to marry contrary to their inclinations; or if they refuse, are cruelly oppressed, and reduced to misery ‡.” As the Godwin family, in particular, had become too great for subjects, so the sons of that family were guilty of the most outrageous acts of cruelty and oppression. “When they beheld any country-seat that pleased their fancy, they gave directions to their followers to murder the proprietor of it and his whole family, in the night, and then obtained a grant of the house and the estate.

\* Hist. Ramsien. c. 114. Hist. Eliensis, c. 42.

† Hist. Ramsien. c. 113.

‡ Hiccesii Epist. Dissertat. p. 100.

“Yet these were the men who were the judges  
“and rulers of the land \*.”

Intemperance and excess in eating and drinking, are acknowledged by all their ancient writers to have been the most prevailing vices both of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes. “The nobility,” says William of Malmsbury, “were much addicted to lust and gluttony; but excessive drinking was the common vice of all ranks of people, in which they spent whole nights and days without intermission †.” All their meetings terminated in riotous excessive drinking, not excepting even their religious festivals; on which they used to drink large draughts of liquor to the honour of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and other saints ‡. Thus, when King Edmund I. celebrated the festival of St Augustin, the apostle of the English, at Puckle church in Gloucestershire, 26th May A. D. 946, with all his courtiers and nobility, they were so overpowered with liquor, that they beheld their sovereign engaged in a disgraceful struggle with a lawless ruffian, by whom he was at last murdered, without having either strength or presence of mind to give him the least assistance ||. Edgar the Peaceable, who mounted the throne about nine years after the death of Edmund, endeavoured to give some

Intemperance in eating and drinking.

\* Hen. Hunt. l. 6. p. 210.

† W. Malms. l. 3. p. 58.

‡ Bartholin. l. 2. c. 12. Northern Antiquities, t. 1. p. 311.

|| W. Malms. l. 2. c. 7.

check to these shameful excesses, which were productive of many mischiefs. One of his regulations to this purpose is so curious, that it merits a place in history. It was the custom in those times, that a whole company drunk out of one large vessel, which was handed about one to another, every one drinking as much as he thought proper. This custom occasioned frequent quarrels, some alleging that others drank a greater quantity of the liquor than fell to their share, and at other times some of the company compelling others to drink more than they inclined. To prevent these quarrels, Edgar commanded the drinking-vessels to be made with knobs of brass, or some other metal, at certain distances from each other; and decreed, that no person, under a certain penalty, should either drink himself, or compel another to drink, more than from one of these nobs or pegs to another, at one draught\*. This shows in what a serious light drinking was viewed even by government, in this period. Many other laws of drinking may be seen in the work quoted below†.

These vices  
not univer-  
sal.

But it is now time to put an end to this unpleasant subject, which I shall finish with the candid observation of the most sensible and impartial of our ancient historians, at the conclusion of his character of the Anglo-Saxons. "Though these vices were too general, they

\* W. Malms. 1. 2. c. 8. p. 31.

† Bartholin. de Causis Contemptæ apud Danos Mortis, p. 133. &c.

“ were not universal. For I know that many  
 “ of the English clergy in those times pursued  
 “ the plain paths of piety and virtue ; and that  
 “ not a few of the laity of all ranks pleased God  
 “ by their conversations. Let no man, there-  
 “ fore, be displeased with what I have said, since  
 “ I have not involved the innocent and guilty  
 “ in the same disgrace \*.”

So many of the remarkable customs of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes who inhabited Eng-  
 land in this period, have been occasionally men-  
 tioned in this and the preceding chapters of this  
 book, that little remains to be said on that sub-  
 ject in this place. That the reader, however,  
 may not be disappointed in his expectations, it  
 may not be improper to take notice, in a few  
 words,—of their modes of address, and expres-  
 sions of respect and civility,—their manner of  
 treating the fair sex,—their ceremonies of mar-  
 riage, their methods of education,—rites of se-  
 pulchre,—customs in peace and war,—the reti-  
 nues and equipages of the great, &c.

Remarkable  
 customs of  
 the Anglo-  
 Saxons and  
 Danes.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes appear to have  
 been no great admirers of a respectful polite ad-  
 dress, but rather rude and haughty in their de-  
 portment. This is acknowledged by their own  
 writers, who frankly confess, that the French in  
 those times very much excelled them, and all  
 the other nations of Europe, in politeness and  
 elegance of manners †. They represent it as a

Rude and  
 unpolished  
 in their ad-  
 dress.

\* W. Malms. l. 3. p. 57.

† Id. l. 2. c. 1.

fortunate circumstance in the life of Egbert, the first English monarch, and also of the celebrated St Dunstan, that they had both resided some time in France, and had there acquired an easy engaging address, quite unknown in their own country \*. The Welsh appear to have been equally unpolished in this period, since there was a necessity for making a law, that none of the courtiers should give the queen a blow, or snatch any thing with violence out of her hands, under the penalty of forfeiting her majesty's protection †. It would be easy to produce many examples of rudeness and indelicacy that were established by law, and practised even in courts of justice, (if they were not unbecoming the purity that ought to be observed in history), which would hardly be believed in the present age. That example of this which the learned reader will find below, in the Latin language, will be a sufficient specimen, and would not have found a place here, if it had not been already published by a reverend and respectable author, after mature deliberation ‡. But though the Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Welsh, and other nations who inhabited Britain in this period, were in general indelicate and unpolished in their

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 1. J. Wallingford, apud Gale, l. 1. p. 543.

† Leges Wallicæ, p. 11. l. 1. c. 8.

‡ Si mulier stuprata lege cum viro agere velit, et si vir factum pernegaverit, mulier, membro virili sinistra prehenso, et dextra reliquiis sanctorum imposita, juret super illas, quod is per vim se isto membro vitiaverit.—*Leges Wallicæ*, p. 85.



manners ; yet we may be certain, that inferiors approached their superiors with gestures which expressed submission ; that persons of condition accosted each other with tokens of respect, and relations with marks of friendship. For all these affections and feelings being natural to mankind, the expressions of them are also natural and universal. We have already seen the humiliating tokens of submission which the imperious Danes exacted from the English, with which it is probable all slaves approached their masters ; and many examples of friends kissing and embracing each other at meeting occur in the history of those times \*. As both the Anglo-Saxons and Danes were exceedingly superstitious, the clergy were the chief objects of their veneration ; and we sometimes hear of kings, queens, and nobles, kneeling, and even prostrating themselves on the ground, before their spiritual guides, to receive their commands or benedictions †.

The English in this period treated the fair sex with a degree of attention and respect which could hardly have been expected from a people so unpolished in their manners. This way of thinking and acting they undoubtedly derived from their ancestors the ancient Germans ; who not only admired and loved their women on account of their personal charms, but entertained a kind of religious veneration for them as the peculiar favourites of heaven, and consulted

Respectful  
behaviour  
to the fair  
sex.

\* Eddius Vita Wilfredi, c. 50. 58.

† Id. c. 50.

them as oracles\*. Agreeable to this, we find some of the Anglo-Saxon ladies were admitted into their most august assemblies, and great attention paid to their opinions; and so considerable was their influence in the most important affairs, that they were the chief instruments of introducing the Christian religion into almost all the kingdoms of the heptarchy †. Many of the Anglo-Saxon ladies of the highest rank were inrolled among their saints, and became the objects of the superstitious veneration of their countrymen ‡. A great number of laws were made to secure the rights, protect the persons, and defend the honour of the fair sex from all insults: they were courted with no little gallantry, and many brave exploits performed with a view to gain their favour ||. It must indeed be confessed, that the English ladies, especially those of the highest rank, were involved in a temporary disgrace and degradation towards the end of the eighth century. This was occasioned by the base and criminal conduct of Eadburga, the daughter of Offa King of Mercia, and Queen of Beorthric King of Wessex; who, after having committed many horrid crimes, at length poisoned her husband, and a young nobleman who was his favourite, with one potion; which excited such a violent and universal indignation

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 8.

† Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 25.

‡ See Chap. 2. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13.

|| Wilkins Leges Saxonicae. Northern Antiquit. vol. 1. c. 12.

against her, that she was obliged to make her escape to the continent. The people of Wessex, finding that they could not execute their vengeance on the person of the offender, testified their resentment, by making a law, "That none of the Kings of Wessex should from thenceforward permit their consorts to be crowned, to sit with them on the throne, or to enjoy the name of queen\*." But Asserius, who relates this transaction at great length, as he had received it from the mouth of his master Alfred the Great, expresses his disapprobation of this law in the strongest terms, declaring it to be a most perverse and detestable law, directly contrary to the customs of all those nations who were descended from the ancient Germans. He observes further, that this law was not long observed. For Ethelwolf, the second monarch of England, having married Judith the daughter of Charles the Bald, King of France, placed her on the throne, in direct opposition to the barbarous custom which had for some time prevailed in his country, without incurring the displeasure of his subjects†. The wives of the English nobility, who had shared in the disgraces of the royal consorts, gradually recovered their former dignity and influence in society, which was at least as great in England in this period as in any country of Europe‡.

\* Asser, *Vita Ælfridi*, p. 3.‡ Spelman's *Life of Alfred*, p. 25.† *Id. ibid.*

Marriage  
ceremonies.

The legal ceremonies and customs in contracting marriages among the Anglo-Saxons have been already mentioned \*; and therefore nothing now remains but to take notice of a few of the arbitrary fashions and changing ceremonies with which the celebration of their marriages was commonly attended. But these fashions and ceremonies being regulated by fancy and caprice, rather than by law, it cannot be supposed that they were either constant or universal. As the marriage was always celebrated at the house of the bridegroom, and all the expence and trouble of it was devolved on him, he was allowed a considerable time to make the necessary preparations. It was not, however, esteemed gallant or fashionable to allow more than six or seven weeks to elapse between the time of contracting and the celebration of the marriage. On the day before the wedding, all the friends and relations of the bridegroom having been invited, arrived at his house, and spent the time in feasting, and in preparing for the approaching ceremony. Next morning the bridegroom's company mounted on horseback, completely armed, and proceeded in great state and order, under the command of one who was called the *forewistaman*, or *foremost man*, to receive and conduct the bride in safety to the house of her future husband. The company proceeded in this martial array to do honour to the

\* See Chap. 3. p. 393.—398.

bride, and to prevent her being intercepted and carried off by any of her former lovers. The bride in their procession was attended by her guardian and other male relations, led by a matron who was called the *bride's-woman*, and followed by a company of young maidens, who were called the *bride's-maids*. She was received by the bridegroom, at her arrival, and solemnly betrothed to him by her guardian in a set form of words\*. After this ceremony was performed, the bridegroom, the bride, and their united companies, went in procession to the church, attended with music, where they received the nuptial benediction from a priest. This was in some places given under the nuptial veil, which was a square piece of cloth, supported by a tall man at each corner over the bridegroom and bride, to conceal her virgin blushes†. When the bride was a widow, the veil was never used, as being esteemed unnecessary. After the nuptial benediction was given, both the bridegroom and bride were crowned by the priest with crowns made of flowers, which were kept in the church for that purpose‡. Marriages, on that account, and for several other reasons, were most commonly celebrated in the summer season. When these ceremonies were finished, the whole company returned in procession to the bridegroom's house, and sat down

\* See Chap. 3. p. 396.

† Muratori, t. 2. p. 111.

‡ Olai Magni, p. 553.

to the nuptial feast, which was as sumptuous and abundant as the entertainer could afford. The afternoon and evening were spent by the youth of both sexes in mirth and dancing; most commonly in the open air; and by the rest of the company in carousing, in which they very much delighted. At night the bride was conducted by her women-attendants to her apartment, and placed in the marriage bed, and soon after the bridegroom was conducted by the men in the same manner; and having both drunk of the marriage cup with all who were present, the whole company retired. The wedding-dresses of the bride and three of her maidens, and of the bridegroom and three of his attendants, were of a peculiar colour and fashion, and could not be used on any other occasion. These dresses, therefore, were anciently the perquisite of the minstrels or musicians who had attended the wedding; but afterwards, when the minstrels fell into disgrace, they were commonly given to some church or monastery\*. Next morning the whole company assembled in the apartment of the new-married pair before they arose, to hear the husband declare the *morgægife*, or *morning-gift*; and a competent number of his relations became sureties to the relations of his wife, that he would perform what he promised†. The feastings and rejoicings continued several days after the marriage, and seldom ended till all

\* Stiernhook, l. 2. c. 1. p. 165.

† Id. Ibid.

the provisions were consumed. To indemnify the husband in some degree for all these expences, the relations of both parties made him some present or other at their departure\*.

When marriages proved fruitful, the mothers Mothers nursed their own children. generally nursed their own children. This laudable practice doth not seem to have been quite universal among the Anglo-Saxon ladies of high rank, even in the former part of this period; for Pope Gregory, in his letter to St Augustin, the apostle of the English, says, “A certain wicked custom hath arisen among married people, that some ladies refuse to nurse the children whom they have brought forth, but deliver them to other women to be nursed †.”

It is said to have been the custom of the Names and surnames. Anglo-Saxons to give their children names as soon as they were born; and these names were all expressive of some great or good quality ‡. Surnames, or family-names, were not in use among the English in this period, or at least not till the reign of Edward the Confessor ||. But as several persons who lived near to each other sometimes had the same proper name, it became necessary, in conversation and writing, in order to distinguish the person of whom they spoke and wrote, to add some word to his name descriptive of his person, disposition, &c. as, *the Long*,—

\* Stiernhook, l. 2. c. 1. p. 165.

† Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 17.

‡ Camden's Remains, p. 45. 55, &c. Verstigan, c. 8.

|| Id. ibid. p. 110.

*the Black,—the White,—the Good,—the Peaceable,—the Unready, &c.* This word, by being constantly added to his name, became a kind of secondary name, but did not descend to his posterity, nor become the surname of his family \*. Sometimes a particular person was distinguished from others of the same name, by adding the name of the place where he dwelt, or the name of his father, and by several other ways †. It may however be observed, that those words which in this period were used as a kind of nicknames to distinguish particular persons of the same proper names from each other, in the next period became family-names, and descended to the posterity of these persons, who probably resembled them in these particulars; and from these words many of our modern surnames are derived ‡. By such slow and insensible degrees are the most prevailing customs established.

Trial of  
children's  
courage.

As the Anglo-Saxons admired valour and intrepidity above all other qualities, they were very anxious to discover whether their sons would be possessed of them or not, and had various methods of putting their courage to the trial even in their infancy. The following is said to have been one of the most common of those modes of trial. Upon a certain day appointed for that purpose, the family and friends being assembled, the father placed his infant son on the

\* Camden's Remains, p. 110. Verstigan, c. 8.

† Hiccesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 23. Verstigan, c. 9.

‡ Verstigan, c. 9.



slanting side of the roof of his house, and there left him. If the child began to cry, and appeared to be afraid of falling, the spectators were much dejected, and prognosticated that he would be a coward; but if he clung boldly to the thatch, and discovered no marks of fear, they were transported with joy, and pronounced that he would prove a *stoutherce*, *i. e.* a brave warrior \*.

The Anglo-Saxons being a rude and fierce people at their arrival in Britain, and for several Methods of education. ages after, it is not to be imagined that they educated their children in a tender and delicate manner, of which they had no ideas, and which would have been very improper for the course of life for which they were designed. Like their ancestors the ancient Germans, persons even of the highest rank accustomed their children to encounter dangers, and to bear cold, hunger, pain, and labour, from their very infancy, that they might be fitted for hunting, which was to be their chief diversion; and war, which was to be their chief employment †. Letters were seldom thought of as any part of the education of the children of the greatest families. When Alfred the Great, the fourth son of King Ethelwulf, was twelve years of age, neither he, nor any of his three elder brothers, could read one word of their native language; and it was by a kind of

\* Howel's General History, part 4. p. 335.

† Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

accident, rather than any formed design, that these princes were afterwards taught to read; though much pains had been taken about their education, and they had been instructed, with the greatest care, in hunting, riding, and all martial exercises \*. It is also observed by Asserius, as one of the greatest changes introduced by his hero Alfred the Great, that his youngest son Ethelwerd, who was designed for the church, was taught to read before he was taught to hunt †. In a word, the Anglo-Saxon and Danish youth enjoyed much freedom, and were allowed to spend their time in rural sports and martial exercises; which contributed not a little to increase their strength, agility, and courage, and fit them for the toils of war.

Rites of sepulture.

The people of Germany and Scandinavia distinguished the different periods of their history by the different rites of sepulture which prevailed in these periods. In the most ancient period they burnt their dead, which was therefore called *burna olld*, or *the age of burning*; in the succeeding period they buried their dead without burning, and raised heaps of stones or earth over their bodies, which was therefore called *haugs olld*, or *the age of hillocks* ‡. Though the end of the first, and commencement of the second of these periods, are not distinctly marked, yet it seems to have taken place before the arrival of

\* Asser. Vita Ælfredi, p. 8.

† Id. p. 13.

‡ Bartholin. l. 1. c. 8.

the Saxons and Danes in Britain, who generally, if not always, buried their dead without burning, and raised barrows over them to perpetuate their memory. Thus when Hubba, a famous Danish chieftain, was slain in battle by the English, A. D. 878, his followers buried his body, and raised a prodigious mount of earth over it, which they called *Hubbastow*, or *the place of Hubba*\*. Though this mount is now swept away by the sea, yet the place on the strand near Appledore in Devonshire, where it once stood, is still known by the name of *Whibblestow*†. When they deposited the body on the ground, and began to cover it with earth, the whole company made the loudest and most bitter lamentations‡. It was so much the custom of the Anglo-Saxons to lay the bodies of their dead on the surface of the ground, and cover them with stones and earth, that they did this even when they buried them in churches; and the floors of some churches were so much encumbered with these little mounts, that they became quite unfit for the celebration of divine service, and were on that account abandoned||. The inconveniencies of this ancient practice were at length so sensibly felt, that several canons were made against burying any in churches, except priests, or saints, or such as paid very well for that privilege; and

\* Brompton, col. 809.

† Dr Borlase's Cornwall, p. 221.

‡ Brompton, col. 809.

|| Wilkins Concilia, t. 1. p. 268. Johnson's Canons, A. D. 994. c. 9.

obliging those that were buried in them to be deposited in graves of a proper depth under the pavement\*. The house in which a dead body lay before it was buried, was a scene of continued feasting, singing, dancing, and all kinds of gambols and diversions, which occasioned no small expence to the family of the deceased†. In some places of the north, they kept the dead unburied, till they had consumed all the wealth which he had left behind him in these games and feastings‡. This custom had prevailed in the times of Paganism, and was discouraged by the church; but it was too agreeable to their excessive fondness for feasting and riot to be soon abandoned. The manner of preparing the body, and the funeral procession of the famous Wilfred, Archbishop of York, who died at Oundle in Northamptonshire, A. D. 708, and was buried at Rippon, are thus described by his historian Eddius: “ Upon a certain day, many abbots  
 “ and clergy met those who conducted the  
 “ corpse of the holy bishop in a hearse, and  
 “ earnestly begged that they might be allowed  
 “ to wash the sacred body, and dress it honoura-  
 “ bly according to its dignity; and they obtain-  
 “ ed permission. Then one of the abbots, named  
 “ *Bacula*, spreading his surplice on the ground,  
 “ the brethren deposited the holy body upon it,  
 “ washed it with their own hands, dressed it in

\* Johnson's Canons, A. D. 994. c. 9.

† Id. A. D. 957. c. 3.

‡ Vita Ælfredi a Spelmanno, Append. 6. p. 208.

“the pontifical habits; and then taking it up,  
 “carried it towards the appointed place, singing  
 “psalms and hymns in the fear of God. Hav-  
 “ing advanced a little, they again deposited the  
 “corpse, pitched a tent over it, bathed the  
 “sacred body in pure water, dressed it in robes  
 “of fine linen, placed it in the herse, and pro-  
 “ceeded, singing psalms, towards the mona-  
 “stery of Rippon. When they approached that  
 “monastery, the whole family of it came out to  
 “meet them, bearing the holy relics. Of all this  
 “numerous company there was hardly one who  
 “abstained from tears; and all raising their  
 “voices, and joining in hymns and songs, they  
 “conducted the body into the church, which  
 “the holy bishop had built, and dedicated to  
 “St Peter, and there deposited it in the most  
 “solemn and honourable manner\*.”

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes being much Customs in war.  
 engaged in war, had many singular customs re-  
 lating to it; of which it is not necessary to make  
 a complete collection. As soon as a war was  
 resolved upon, it was one of the first objects to  
 discover what would be the event of it; not by  
 comparing their own forces with those of their  
 enemies, but by attempting to discover the will  
 of Heaven by various arts of divination. The  
 only one of these arts which seems to have had the  
 least connection with any thing like reason, is  
 that one which is thus described by Tacitus, as

\* Eddius in Vita Wilfridi, c. 63.

practised by their ancestors the ancient Germans :  
“ It is their custom, when they engage in war  
“ with any neighbouring nation, to procure a  
“ captive of that nation by some means or other ;  
“ him they oblige to engage in single combat  
“ with one of their own people, each armed  
“ after the manner of his country ; and from  
“ the event of that combat, they draw a presage  
“ of their future victories or defeats \*.” They  
were at no less pains to gain the favour, than to  
discover the will of Heaven ; in order to which,  
while they were Pagans, they offered many sacri-  
fices to their gods, and sometimes even human  
victims, before they embarked in their military  
expeditions †. Their priests, bearing their idols,  
constantly attended their armies. exercised mili-  
tary discipline, and determined what were the  
most fortunate seasons for giving battle ‡. After  
the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes  
to Christianity, they long retained these ancient  
customs, a little changed, and accommodated to  
their new religion. Before a crew of Christian  
pirates set sail on a plundering expedition, with  
the pious design of robbing and murdering all  
who fell in their way, they never neglected to  
take the sacrament, to confess their sins to a  
priest, and to perform the penances which he  
prescribed, in hopes (says my author) that God  
would bless and prosper them in their designs ||.

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 10.

† Dudo St Quintin. de Morib. Norman. l. 1.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 10.

|| Saxo Grammat. l. 14.

The Anglo-Saxon armies were always attended by a great number of ecclesiastics to pray for their success, who constantly carried with them their most venerable relics, in order to secure the protection of those saints to whom they had belonged.\*

Nor did these churchmen confine themselves within their own province of prayer, but, like their Pagan predecessors, interfered very much with the conduct of the armies which they attended, by inflicting the censures of the church on those who behaved improperly, and conferring military honours, particularly knighthood, with the following ceremonies: "The person who was to be knighted first confessed all his sins to the bishop, abbot, monk, or priest, and performed all the acts of devotion, and other penances, which he enjoined. He then watched a whole night in the church, and next morning, before he heard mass, he solemnly offered his sword upon the altar. After the reading of the gospel, the priest blessed the sword, took it from the altar, and, with his benediction, hung it about the soldier's neck; who having communicated of the sacred mysteries at the same mass, was proclaimed a true and lawful knight †."

Method of  
making  
knights.

When the Anglo-Saxons advanced to battle, they made a most horrid and tremendous noise, War-song.

\* Historia Ramsien. c. 72.

† Ingulphi Historia, edit. a Hen. Savile, p. 513.

by singing, shouting, and clashing their arms; and to prevent their horses being frightened at that noise, they had a custom of making them deaf; which was at length condemned for its cruelty by the canons of the church\*. The other military customs of the Anglo-Saxons which had any thing remarkable or singular in them, have been already mentioned in our account of their military arts†.

Retinues of  
the great.

The Anglo-Saxon kings, queens, and nobles, lived in a kind of rude magnificence and state, and were always surrounded with a crowd of officers, retainers, and servants. “Edwin King of Northumberland,” says Bede, “lived in so much splendour, that he had not only standards carried before him in the time of war, but even in times of peace, when he travelled with his ordinary retinue through the provinces of his kingdom. Nay, when he was at home, and walked through the streets of his capital, he had always a standard carried before him, of that kind which the Romans call *Tufa*, and the English call *Tuuf*‡.” This kind of standard was made of feathers of various colours in the form of a globe, and fixed on the top of a pole. Canute the Great, who was the richest and most magnificent prince in Europe of his time, never appeared in public, or made any journey, without a retinue of three thousand men,

\* Wilkins Concil. t. 1. p. 150.

† Chap. 5. p. 137—154.

‡ Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 16.



well mounted and completely armed \*. These numerous attendants were called the king's *housecarles*, and formed a corps of body-guards, or household troops, for the honour and safety of the prince's person.

Chariots for travelling were not quite unknown in England in this period, though they seem to have been very rare, and only used by queens. Thus we are told by Eddius, in the life of Archbishop Wilfred, that when the Queen of Northumberland travelled in her chariot from place to place, she hung up in it a bag with the precious relics which she had violently taken from that prelate †.

It would be tedious, and unbecoming the dignity of history, to enumerate all the trifling peculiarities in the manners and customs of the Anglo-Saxons, which are mentioned by the author quoted below, to whom we must refer such of our readers as desire to be acquainted with these *minutiae* ‡.

The two most ancient and original languages of Europe were the Celtic and Teutonic, or Gothic; from which, too, many other languages were derived; and particularly those that were spoken by the several nations which inhabited Britain in this period ||.

It hath been already proved,—that the language of the ancient Britons, when they were

Chariots  
used by  
queens.

Language  
of the  
Scots and  
Welsh.

\* Sueno Agonis, p. 152.

† Eddius Vita Wilfredi, c. 33.

‡ Verstigan's Restitution of decayed Intelligence, chap. 3.

|| See Preface to Northern Antiquities.

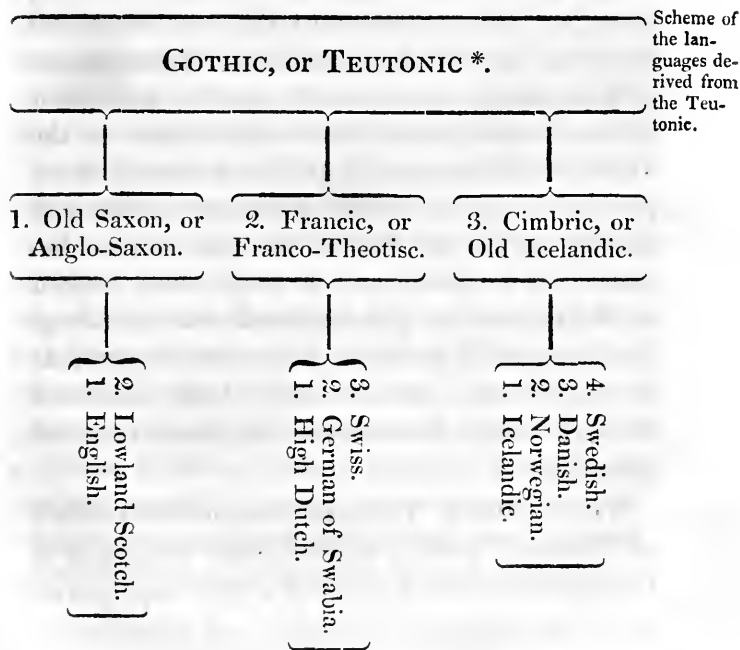
first invaded by the Romans, was a dialect of the Celtic;—that the great body of the people retained this language through all the Roman times:—that they spoke it at the arrival of the Saxons, and transmitted it to their posterity in Wales, by whom it is still spoken. The Caledonian nations in the north of Britain spoke also a dialect of the same very ancient language; and as their posterity in the highlands of Scotland still remain unmixed with any other people, they continue to speak the language of their remote ancestors, with little variation. Venerable Bede indeed observes, that in his time the Britons, Scots, and Picts, spoke three different languages; by which he probably means, that the languages of these nations were not exactly the same, but differed considerably from each other, as the Welsh and Erse, the English and Scotch, do at present\*. It will not be necessary to take any further notice of the Celtic tongue, or the dialects of it which have so long been spoken in Wales, and in the highlands and islands of Scotland, either in this or the succeeding periods of this work; because they have remained through many ages without any very material alterations.

Language  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons  
and Danes.

The Gothic or Teutonic tongue was another of the most ancient and original languages of Europe; different dialects of which were spoken by all the nations of Germany and Scandinavia,

\* See vol. 2. book 1. c. 7. p. 336, &c. Bede Hist. Eccles. 1. 1. c. 1.

and by all the numerous tribes which issued from these countries, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, and founded so many powerful states on the ruins of the Roman empire. The following table will give the reader a distinct view of the chief tongues, ancient and modern, which have descended from this venerable parent of languages; and for his further satisfaction he will find, in the Appendix, No. 5. specimens of these tongues; from which their affinity to each other, and to their common parent, will very plainly appear.



\* See the Preface to Northern Antiquities.

Reasons  
why the  
Italian,  
French,  
and Spa-  
nish lan-  
guages,  
are not in-  
serted in  
the above  
scheme.

The modern Italian, French, and Spanish languages, are not inserted in the above table among the descendants of the ancient Gothic, though kingdoms were founded in Italy, France, and Spain, by nations who spoke dialects of that language; because these nations, instead of extirpating the ancient inhabitants of these countries, who were far more numerous than themselves, settled amongst them, and mixed with them; and by that means lost the greatest part of their own ancient languages, and adopted those of the nations which they had conquered. In all these three languages, indeed, there is a tincture of the Teutonic; but they are chiefly derived from the Latin, and some other tongues, which had been spoken by the original inhabitants of these countries, and by other nations which had occasionally settled in them\*.

The Saxon  
language.

The Anglo-Saxon and Danish are the only descendants of the ancient Gothic, in the above table, with which we are here concerned; because these languages were spoken by the Anglo-Saxons and Danes who inhabited England and the south-east parts of Scotland in this period. Nor will it be necessary to say much concerning the Danish; because it did not long remain a distinct tongue in any part of England, but was blended with the Anglo-Saxon, and formed a particular dialect of that language†. This

\* Verstigan, c. 7. Muratori, t. 2. p. 990.

† Hiccesii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 88, &c.

Dano-Saxonic dialect was chiefly spoken in the kingdom of Northumberland, where the Danes abounded most; and it is sometimes given as a reason, by our ancient historians, for the Danes landing so frequently in that country,—“that there was a great mixture of Danes among the inhabitants of it; and that their language had a great affinity with the Danish \*.” That the Anglo-Saxon language was spoken in the south-east parts of Scotland, through the whole of this period, is undeniable †. When Edgar the Peaceable, King of England, yielded Lothian to Kenneth II. King of Scotland, A. D. 975, it was on these express conditions,—that the people of that country should still be called Englishmen, be governed by the English laws, and be allowed to speak the English language ‡.

Many extravagant things have been advanced concerning the great antiquity and superior excellency of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. According to some writers, it was the most ancient and most excellent language in the world, spoken by the first parents of mankind in paradise; and from it they pretend to derive the names *Adam*, *Eve*, *Cain*, *Abel*, and all the antediluvian patriarchs ||. But leaving these extravagancies to their authors and admirers, it is sufficient to say, that the Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon tongue is so

Antiquity  
and excel-  
lency of the  
Saxon lan-  
guage.

\* J. Wallingford, edit. a Gale, p. 548.

† Camden's Remains, p. 21.

‡ J. Wallingford, edit. Gale, p. 545.

|| Verstigan, c. 7. p. 149.

ancient, that it is impossible to trace it to its origin ; and that it was so excellent and copious, in the period we are now examining, as to enable those who spoke it to express all their ideas with sufficient force and perspicuity \*.

Contained  
many poly-  
syllables.

It hath been also affirmed very positively, that the most ancient Anglo-Saxon tongue consisted almost entirely of words of one syllable †. But of this it is impossible to produce any proof, as the most ancient specimens of that language which are now extant, do not remarkably abound in monosyllables, but contain a competent number of words, consisting of two, three, and four syllables ‡. It is indeed true, that the far greatest part of our present English words of one syllable are of Saxon origin ; and this is all that can be affirmed with truth in this particular. It may even be observed, that some words which consist now only of one syllable, consisted anciently of two,—as *king*, which was in Saxon *cining*, &c.

Affinity with  
the Greek.

Some learned men have discovered, or imagined, a very remarkable affinity between the Greek and Anglo-Saxon, both in their radical words, and in their general structure ; and it must be confessed, that they have shown no little learning and ingenuity in tracing that affinity ||. With this view, they have collected a considerable number of words, which are names of the

\* Camden's Remains, p. 25.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 1. &c.

|| Camden's Remains, p. 32. 33. Casaubon Dissertat. de Lingua Anglican. p. 236. Clarke on Coins, p. 36. &c.

most necessary and common things, and of a similar sound and sense in both languages. This similarity is indeed very great in some of these words; but in many others it seems to be fanciful and far-fetched. With regard to their general formation and structure, a great analogy hath been observed between these two languages,—in the termination of the infinitive of their verbs,—in the use of their articles and negatives,—in the manner of comparing their adjectives, and compounding their words, and in some other particulars\*. This affinity between these languages is supposed to have been occasioned by the vicinity, relationship, and commercial intercourse between the Goths and Greeks in very remote ages†.

It is not to be imagined that the Anglo-Saxon language continued in the same state, through the whole of this long period which we are now considering; though it would be too laborious, or rather impossible, to trace its gradual changes. No specimens are now remaining of the language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity; of which, therefore, we can have no certain knowledge. To give our English readers some faint idea at least of the language spoken by their remote ancestors in different parts, and at the conclusion of this period, it may not be improper to lay before them two

Changes in  
the Saxon  
language.

\* Casaubon *Dissertat. de Lingua Anglican.* p. 236.

† *Id. ibid.*

copies of the Lord's prayer, which appear to be of different ages, and a charter of King Harold, which must have been written in the last year of this period, with very literal translations interlined. By an attentive inspection of these specimens, they will perceive the great difference that there is between the Anglo-Saxon and modern English ; and at the same time they will discover the great resemblance, and gradual approaches of the former of these languages to the latter. The Anglo-Saxon, in all these specimens, and some others which are given in the Appendix, are printed in Roman, and not in Saxon letters, which would have rendered them quite unintelligible to the bulk of our readers.

Saxon copy  
of the Lord's  
prayer, and  
literal ver-  
sion.

*The most ancient copy of the Lord's Prayer in Saxon, with a very literal translation.*

Urin Fader thic arth in heofnas,  
Our Father which art in heaven,

1. Sic \* gehalgud thin noma ;  
Be hallowed thine name ;

2. To cymeth thin ryc † ;  
To come thine kingdom ;

3. Sic thin willa sue is in heofnas and in eortho ;  
Be thine will so is in heaven and in earth ;

\* The syllable *ge* is here a mere expletive, and was prefixed by the Anglo-Saxons, as well as by the Greeks, to many of their words.

† Some vestige of this word still remains in the word *bishopric*.



4. Urin hlaf ofirwistlic \* sel † us to daig ;  
Our loaf superexcellent give us to day ;
5. And forgefe us scylda urna, sue we forgefan  
And forgive us debts ours, so we forgiven  
scyldgum urum ;  
debts of ours ;
6. And no inlead usig in custnung,  
And not lead us into temptation,
7. Ah gefrig usich from ifle.  
But free us each from evil. Amen.

Though the above Saxon version of the Lord's prayer is evidently very ancient, and is said to have been written by Eadfredi, Bishop of Lindisfarne, about A. D. 700 ; yet we may observe, that there are not above three or four words in it that are altogether obsolete, and quite unintelligible to an English reader ‡. It may be proper also to take notice, that several words in the Saxon consist of more syllables than the same words in modern English, and not so much as one of fewer ; for *ryc* is a different word from *kingdom*, which came in its place.

\* The great difference here is owing to the Saxon translators having put a different sense on the original.

† The verb *selan*, or *sellan*, changed its meaning even in the Saxon times, and signified to *sell*, though anciently it had signified to *give*.

‡ Camden's Remains, p. 22.

Later copy  
of the  
Lord's  
prayer,  
with a  
literal  
translation.

*A later copy of the Lord's prayer in Saxon,  
with a very literal translation.*

Thu vre Fader the eart on heofinum,  
Thou our Father that art in heaven ;

1. Cum thin ric ;  
Come thine kingdom ;
  2. Si thin willa on eorthan swa swa on heofinum ;  
Be thine will on earth so as in heaven ;
  3. Syle us to daeg urn daegthanlican hlaf :  
Give us to day our daily loaf ;
  4. And forgif us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgifath  
And forgive us our guilts, so as we forgive  
tham the with us agyltath ;  
them that against us are guilty ;
  5. And ne led us on costnung ;  
And not lead us into temptation ;
  6. Ac alys us from yfle.  
And redeem us from evil.
- Si it swo.  
Be it so.

This last copy of the Lord's prayer, which is supposed to have been written about two centuries after the former, hath still fewer obsolete words in it, and evidently approacheth nearer to modern English.

The state of the Anglo-Saxon language, in the very last year of the present period, may be discovered even by an English reader, by perusing with attention the following short charter of Harold our last Anglo-Saxon king, and comparing it with the interlined version; which is contrived to give its meaning in words as near as possible to the original, without any regard to elegance or propriety of expression :

Another specimen.

Harold King greet Ailnoth and Tovid, and  
 Harold King greets Ailnoth and Tovid, and  
 alle mine theines on Somerseten frendliche.  
 all mine thanes in Somerset friendlily.

Charter of King Harold, with a literal translation.

And ic cyeth eou, that ic will that Giso  
 And I kyth\* to you, that I will that Giso

Bisheop beo his saca† werth and his socna,  
 Bishop be his sac worthy and his soc,

ofer his lond and ofer his mannen : and tolles  
 over his land and over his men : and of toll

\* This verb, *to kyth*, in Saxon *cyethan*, "to discover or make known," is still used in the following verse of that version of the *Psalms* of David which is appointed to be sung in the church of Scotland.

Thou gracious to the gracious art,  
 To upright men upright.

Pure to the pure, froward thou kyth'st,  
 Unto the froward wight.

*Psal.* xviii. 25, 26.

† *Saca*, and *socna*, now commonly written *sac* and *soc*, signify "a privilege of holding courts and judging causes," called *saca*, within their own lands, called *socna*; and to be *sac* and *soc* worthy, was to have a right to this privilege. *Hickesii Thesaur.* p. 159.

werth \*, and temes †, and infangenes ‡  
 worthy, and of slaves, and of the trial of  
 thefes, binnen burckh and butan: swo full  
 thieves, within burgh and without: so full  
 and swo forth swo he furmist was on Edward  
 and so forth as it first was in Edward  
 kinges dage on alle thingan. And ich bidde eou  
 king's day in all things. And I bid you  
 alle, that ge been him on fultumes, at thys  
 all, that ye be to him assisting his  
 Christendome Godes yerichtten, for to setten  
 Christian and God's rights, for to stablish  
 and to driven, loc thar him neth sy, and heo  
 and to drive, when there need be, and he  
 eoures fultumes bithyrfe; swo swo ich yetruthen  
 your support wanteth; so as I confidence

\* *Tolles werth* was the privilege of holding a market, and exacting certain tolls or customs from those who frequented it. *Ley's Saxon Dictionary, in voc.*

† *Teme* or *team* in Saxon signified a progeny or family of children: and to be *teams werth*, signified to have the property of their slaves, and of the children and posterity of these slaves. There are still some vestiges of this word in use;—as, “a *team* of ducks;”—and in Scotland, “a bearn-*team*,” a family of children.

‡ *Infangenes thefes*, which is most commonly written in one word, was a technical term in the Anglo-Saxon law, denoting a privilege granted by the king to a bishop or thane, to try a thief in his own court, who had been fanged or caught within his own territories. *Spelman Gloss. in voc.*

to eou habbe, that we willan for mina lūven.  
in you have, that ye will for mine love.

And ich nille ye thefun that man, him æt  
And I will not ye offend that man, or him in  
anie thingan anye unlag beodthe. God eu,  
any thing any unlawful deed do. God you  
gehealde.  
hold.

From these specimens, the people of England will perceive, with pleasure, that the language which was spoken by their ancestors above a thousand years ago, was copious, expressive, and musical ; abounding very much in vowels, diphthongs, and polysyllables, which are esteemed the greatest excellencies of language. They will observe also, with surprise, its great resemblance in the substance of it to modern English ; and that the far greatest part of the words of it are still in use, though many of them are much changed in their spelling and meaning. The further gradual changes of this language will be traced, in their proper places, in the subsequent volumes of this work.

A minute investigation of the several parts of the dress of both sexes, and of all the different ranks in society, in the several British nations, in this period, would be tedious, and inconsistent with the nature and design of history ; and therefore a general view of this subject is all that can be expected in this place.

Minute investigation of the changes of dress not necessary.

Dress not  
very liable  
to change in  
this period.

In the first stages of society, the modes and fashions of dress are not very changeable. Arts are then in their infancy, and do not furnish materials for fancy to work upon; and men being little accustomed to changes of any kind, are uncommonly tenacious of the fashions, as well as of the other customs of their ancestors. It is a sufficient proof of this, that the very ancient and barbarous practice of body-painting was not quite unfashionable in the present period, as there was a necessity for making a law against it, A. D. 785\*. It appears also from the same law, that long after the introduction of Christianity, some Pagan modes of dress were still retained, that were much condemned by the church, but are not described.

Dress of the  
Scots, Picts,  
and Welsh.

We know of no very remarkable change in the dress of the Scots and Picts in this period, among whom the arts were still in a very imperfect state. The posterity of the ancient Britons of the south, after their retreat into Wales, were not in better circumstances in this respect, being but very imperfectly and coarsely clothed. They are said to have despised linen, and to have had their heads, feet, and legs uncovered, with nothing on their bodies but coarse rough breeches, a kind of jacket next their skin, and a mantle or plaid over all, which served them to sleep in by night, and protected them from the cold and rain by day, as the learned reader will

\* Wilkin. Concilia, t. 1. p. 150.

see by the rhiming verses below \*. This, however, was only the dress of the common people of Wales in this period; for it plainly appears from the laws of that country, that the royal family, the officers of state, and other persons of high rank, were not strangers to the use of linen, and of shoes and stockings. By these laws, all the officers of the household were appointed to be clothed thrice every year, the king furnishing the woollen, and the queen the linen cloth for that purpose †. The several parts of the dress of the king and of the nobility are enumerated; among which are shirts, stockings, shoes, and boots, with girdles or belts, at which their knives and daggers, with whetstones for sharpening them, were suspended ‡. Though hose or stockings are mentioned in the ancient laws of Wales, we must not imagine that they were of the same kind, or manufactured in the same manner, with those which are now in use; for the ingenious and useful arts of knitting and weaving stockings, were not invented till several centuries after the conclusion of this period. The stockings of those times were only certain clumsy coverings for the legs and feet,

\* His vestium insignia  
Sunt clames et camisia,  
Et crispa femoralia  
Sub ventis et sub pluvia,  
Quamvis brumescat Borea.  
Sub istis apparatus  
Spiritis linthiaminibus.

† Leges Wallicæ, p. 8.

Stant, sedent, cubant, dormiunt,  
Pergant, pugnant, prosiliunt.  
Hi sine super tunicis,  
Nudatis semper tibiis,  
Vix aliter incederent  
Regi licet occurrerent.  
*Ranulph Higden, apud Gale, p. 187.*

‡ Id. p. 273.

made of linen or woollen cloth, and wrapped about them, or fastened on them in several different ways, some of which will be hereafter mentioned.

General description of the dress of the Anglo-Saxons.

The dress of the ancient Germans, as described by Tacitus, was very simple and imperfect, consisting chiefly of a large mantle or plaid, which covered the whole body, and was fastened on the right shoulder by a button or broach \*. Some of the most opulent amongst them wore under their mantles a kind of tunic, not loose and flowing like those of the Parthians and Sarmatians, but exactly fitted to the shape of their bodies, and ornamented with patches of the skins of animals of different colours. The dress of the women did not differ much from that of the men, only their mantles were commonly made of linen, and their tunics had no sleeves, and did not cover their bosoms †. The Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, seem to have been dressed in the same manner with their ancestors, the ancient Germans. For Paulus Diaconus, in his history of the Longobards, gives the following short description of their dress, (which he says was the same with that of the Anglo-Saxons), taken from a historical painting of the sixth century, which he had seen in the palace of Theodelinda, Queen of the Longobards, in Italy. “ In the same place, Queen “ Theodelinda built a palace, in which she

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 17.

† Id. ibid.



“ caused some of the exploits of the Longobards to be painted. From this ancient painting, we see how the Longobards dressed their hair in those times, and also what kind of garments they wore. Their garments, which were the same with those of the Anglo-Saxons, were loose and flowing, and chiefly made of linen, adorned with broad borders, woven or embroidered with various colours \*.” As this description was taken from a painting, it probably respects only the upper garment or mantle; and as this painting was in the palace of a queen, many female figures were probably introduced into it; which might be the reason that many of these mantles appeared to be of linen. For it is hardly possible, that all the garments of the men among the Longobards and Anglo-Saxons, especially the upper ones, could be made of linen, at a time when that kind of cloth was so scarce. Such garments too would have been very uncomfortable and inconvenient to nations that were so much exposed to storms, and engaged in military expeditions.

To gratify more fully the curiosity of the people of England in this particular, it may not be improper to collect a more complete account of the several parts of the dress of their ancestors, and of the arts with which they used to adorn their persons.

More particular account.

\* Paul. Diacon. de Gestis Longobard. l. 4. c. 23.

Fondness  
for the  
warm-bath.

All the nations which issued from Germany and Scandinavia in the middle ages, and particularly the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, who settled in England, long retained their fondness for bathing in warm water, which they had derived from their ancestors the ancient Germans \*. In the Anglo-Saxon laws, the warm-bath is always considered as one of the necessities of life, and no less indispensable than meat, drink, or clothing †. One of the most common penances enjoined by the canons of the church in those times, to those who had been guilty of great sins, was, to abstain for a certain time from the warm-bath themselves, and to give meat, drink, clothes, firing, bath, and bed, to a certain number of poor people ‡. On the other hand, they had a very great aversion to bathing in cold water; which was also enjoined as a penance. To bathe at least every Saturday, was the constant practice of all who had any regard to personal propriety, and wished to recommend themselves to the favour of the ladies ||.

The Anglo-  
Saxons vain  
of fine and  
long hair.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes considered fine hair as one of the greatest beauties and ornaments of their persons, and were at no little pains in dressing it to advantage §. Young ladies before marriage wore their hair unco-

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 22.

† Johnson's Canons, A. D. 963. c. 68. 69.

|| Weltichindus, l. 1. Cluver. l. 1. c. 16. p. 106.

§ J. Wallingford, apud Gale, t. 1. p. 547.

‡ Id. ibid.

vered and untied, flowing in ringlets over their shoulders; but as soon as they were married, they cut it shorter, tied it up, and put on a head-dress of some kind or other, according to the prevailing fashion \*. To have the hair entirely cut off, was so great a disgrace, that it was one of the greatest punishments inflicted on those women who were guilty of adultery †. The Danish soldiers who were quartered upon the English, in the reigns of Edgar the Peaceable and of Ethelred the Unready, were the beaus of those times, and were particularly attentive to the dressing of their hair; which they combed at least once every day, and thereby captivated the affections of the English ladies ‡. The clergy, both secular and regular, were obliged to shave the crowns of their heads, and keep their hair short, which distinguished them from the laity; and several canons were made against their concealing their tonsure, or allowing their hair to grow long ||. The shape of this clerical tonsure was the subject of long and violent debates between the English clergy on the one hand, and those of the Scots and Picts on the other; that of the former being circular, and that of the latter only semicircular §. It appears very plainly that long flowing hair was univer-

\* Du Cange Gloss. voc. Capelli.

† Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 19.

‡ J. Wallingford, apud Gale. p. 547.

|| Johnson's Canons, A. D. 960. c. 47.

§ Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 21.

sally esteemed a great ornament; and the tonsure of the clergy was considered as an act of mortification and self-denial, to which many of them submitted with reluctance, and endeavoured to conceal as much as possible. Some of them, who affected the reputation of superior sanctity, inveighed with great bitterness against the long hair of the laity; and laboured earnestly to persuade them to cut it short, in imitation of the clergy. Thus the famous St Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, who flourished in the last part of this period, is said to have declaimed with great vehemence against luxury of all kinds, but chiefly against long hair, as most criminal and most universal. “The English,” says William of Malmsbury, in his life of St Wulstan, “were  
“very vicious in their manners, and plunged  
“in luxury, through the long peace which  
“they had enjoyed in the reign of Edward  
“the Confessor. The holy prelate Wulstan  
“reproved the wicked of all ranks with great  
“boldness; but he rebuked those with the  
“greatest severity who were proud of their  
“long hair. When any of those vain people  
“bowed their heads before him to receive his  
“blessing, before he gave it, he cut a lock of  
“their hair with a little sharp knife, which he  
“carried about him for that purpose, and com-  
“manded them, by way of penance for their  
“sins, to cut all the rest of their hair in the  
“same manner. If any of them refused to  
“comply with this command, he denounced

“ the most dreadful judgments upon them, re-  
 “ proached them for their effeminacy, and fore-  
 “ told, that as they imitated women in the  
 “ length of their hair, they would imitate them  
 “ in their cowardice when their country was in-  
 “ vaded; which was accomplished at the land-  
 “ ing of the Normans\*.” In times of peace,  
 the Anglo-Saxons and Danes covered their heads  
 with a bonnet, exactly of the same shape with  
 that which is still used by the common country-  
 people in Scotland; in times of war they co-  
 vered them with their helmets †.

Some of the ancient German nations allowed <sup>Their</sup> their beards to grow till they had killed an <sup>beards.</sup> enemy in battle; while others shaved them all except their upper lips ‡. The Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, and for a considerable time after, most probably followed the former of these fashions, as well as their near neighbours the Longobards, to whom in all things they bore a very great resemblance ||. After the introduction of Chistianity, their clergy were obliged to shave their beards, in obedience to the laws, and in imitation of the practice of all the western churches §. This distinction between the clergy and the laity subsisted for some time; and a writer of the seventh century complains,

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 254.

† See the plates of the famous tapestry of Bayeux, Memoires de Literature, t. 12.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 31. Diod. Sicul. l. 5. c. 28.

|| Paul. Diacon. l. 1. c. 9.

§ Muratori, t. 2. p. 390.

that the manners of the clergy were so corrupted, that they could not be distinguished from the laity by their actions, but only by their want of beards\*. By degrees, the English laity began to imitate the clergy so far as to shave all their beards except their upper lips, on each of which they left a lock of hair; by which they were distinguished from the French and Normans, who shaved their whole beards. The English spies who had been sent by King Harold to discover the strength and situation of the army of William Duke of Normandy, having been taken prisoners, were conducted through the whole army, and desired to take a full view of every thing; after which they were sumptuously entertained, and courteously dismissed. “At their  
“return,” says Malmsbury, “being asked by Harold what they had seen? they broke out into  
“high encomiums on the magnificence, confidence, and courtesy of the Duke; and seriously added, that his whole army seemed to  
“them to be composed of priests, as all their  
“beards, and even their upper lips, were shaved. For the English at that time generally shaved  
“their beards; but allowed the hair of their  
“upper lips to grow to its full length. The  
“King smiled at their ignorance and simplicity; well knowing, that those whom they believed  
“to be priests were brave warriors†.”

\* Muratori, t. 2. p. 300.

† W. Malms. l. 3.

The Anglo-Saxons, in this period, were far <sup>Their shirts.</sup> from being strangers to the use of linen, for of this all persons of any consideration amongst them wore shirts next their bodies. These were esteemed so pleasant and so necessary, that wearing a woollen shirt is reckoned among those things which constituted deep satisfaction or penance for very great sins\*. In that particular description of the French dress (which was the same with the English) in the ninth century, given by Eginhart, the historian of Charlemagne, a shirt of linen next the body is mentioned as an essential part †.

Above their shirts they wore a tunic or vest <sup>Their tunics.</sup> fitted to the shape of their bodies, and reaching to the middle of their thighs, sometimes with sleeves, and sometimes without them. Kings, princes, and great men, had their vests made of silk, or at least with borders of silk, embroidered with various figures ‡. “The tunics,” says Alcuinus, “of soldiers are commonly made of linen, and exactly fitted to the shape of their bodies, that they may expedite in pointing their spears, holding their shields, and brandishing their swords ||.”

The Anglo-Saxons wore breeches, either of <sup>Their breeches and belts.</sup> linen or woollen cloth, reaching to the knee, and sometimes considerably below it, very much re-

\* Johnson's Canons, A. D. 963. Can. 64.

† Eginhart. Vita Caroli Magni, c. 23.

|| Alcuin. Lib. de Offic. Divin.

‡ Id. ibid.

sembling the trowsers worn by our sailors\*. About their bodies, above their tunics, they wore belts or girdles, in which their swords were stuck almost perpendicular†. These belts were sometimes embroidered, and adorned with precious stones‡.

Their  
stockings.

The common people among the Anglo-Saxons for the most part had no stockings, nor any other covering on their legs; and even the clergy celebrated mass with their legs naked, till the following law was made against that practice in the council of Chalchuythe, A. D. 785: "Let no minister of the altar presume to approach it to celebrate mass with naked legs, lest his filthiness appear, and God be offended||." But persons of condition covered their legs with a kind of stockings made of linen or woollen cloth, which were sometimes fastened on, and made to fit the shape, by being wrapped about with bandages, which made many turns round the leg, from the foot to the knee§. These bandages are very visible on the legs of Edward the Confessor, Guido Count of Ponthieu, and a few other great personages, in the famous tapestry of Bayeux, which is one of the most curious monuments of those times now remainiug.

Their shoes.

Though many of the figures in this tapestry are without stockings, none of them are without

\* See the plates of the tapestry of Bayeux, Montfauçon Monumens de Monarchie Française, t. 1.

† Id. ibid.

|| Wilkins Concil. t. 1. p. 147.

‡ W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6.

§ Lindenbrogii Gloss. p. 1469.



shoes; which makes it probable that shoes (as they are more necessary) were more generally used than stockings in this period. Many of our readers will be surprised to hear, that the greatest princes of Europe, in the ninth and tenth centuries, wore wooden shoes, which are now esteemed the marks of the most deplorable indigence and misery. Those of a great king are thus described by one who had seen them: “ The shoes which covered each of his feet are still remaining: their soles are of wood, and the upper part of leather, tied with thongs. They were so nicely fitted to the shape of the feet, that you might discern the order of the toes, terminating in a point at the great toe; so that the shoe of the right foot could not be put upon the left foot, nor that of the left on the right \*.”

The sagum or mantle was the principal garment of the ancient Germans, and of all the nations descended from them; particularly of the Franks and Anglo-Saxons †. This garment is thus described by a cotemporary writer: “ Their uppermost garment was a mantle of white or blue cloth, square, and lined, and so formed, that when it was put on their shoulders, it reached to their feet before and behind; but hardly reached to their knees on the two sides ‡.” These mantles were fastened on the

\* Eginhart. a Schminkio edit. p. 111.

† Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 17.

‡ Lindenbrogii Gloss. in voc. Sagum.

right shoulder by a button; and were of great use to soldiers in military expeditions, protecting them from the inclemency of the weather, and keeping them warm both in the night and day. It was on this account that Charlemagne prohibited the use of short cloaks, which began to come into fashion in his time. "Of what use," said that wise prince, "are these trifling little cloaks? When we are in bed, they do not cover us; when we are on horseback, they do not protect us from the wind and rain; and when we retire to ease nature, they do not secure our legs from the cold and frost \*." The mantles used by kings at their coronations, and on other great solemnities, were of purple cloth or silk, embroidered with gold. "I give," said Witlaf King of Mercia, in his charter to the abbey of Croiland, "to the secretary of the said abbey my purple mantle, which I wore at my coronation, to be made into a cope, to be used by those who minister at the holy altar; and also my golden veil, embroidered with the history of the siege of Troy, to be hung up in the church on my anniversary †." The mantles of princesses and ladies of distinction were made of silk or fine linen.

Distinctions  
between the  
dresses of  
the sexes.

There was little difference between the dresses of the two sexes among the ancient Germans; only the women made more use of linen than

\* Lindenbrogii Gloss. in voc. Sagum.

† Ingulph. Hist. Croil. p. 488.

the men, the sleeves of their tunics were shorter, reaching no further than to their elbows; and their bosoms were uncovered when they had not on their mantles \*. The dresses of the two sexes among the Anglo-Saxons seem to have differed in some other particulars. The tunics of the ladies reached to their ancles;—their mantles were fastened before, and not on the right shoulder, with a button; they had openings on each side for the arms, and they flowed down to the ground on all sides. These circumstances appear very plainly by an attentive inspection of the female figures in the famous tapestry of Bayeux †.

Persons of rank and wealth, of both sexes, <sup>Ornaments of gold.</sup> among the Danes and Anglo-Saxons, seem to have been very fond of ornaments of gold; as gold chains and bracelets. Gold chains were worn by all officers of distinction, both civil and military, as badges of their offices; and these chains were given them by their sovereigns, who, on this account, are sometimes called the *givers of gold chains*, in the poems of those times ‡. The famous present made by Earl Godwin to King Hardicanute hath been already mentioned, and sufficiently shews, that bracelets of gold on each arm were ornaments worn by warriors, as well as by ladies, in this period ||. The Danes, in particular, were so

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 17.

† Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, t. 12. p. 381. 442.

‡ Chron. Saxon. p. 112.

|| See vol. iii. p. 136.

great admirers of these ornaments, that they esteemed no oaths so sacred and inviolable as those that were sworn on bracelets of gold \*. In a word, we have the direct testimony of a cotemporary writer, that, at the conclusion of this period, the English were admired by other nations, and even by the French, for the richness and elegance of their dress. “ The French  
 “ and Norman nobility admired the fine per-  
 “ sons, the flowing hair, and the beautiful  
 “ dresses, of the English nobles. For the Eng-  
 “ lish women excel all others in needle-work,  
 “ and embroidering with gold; and their male  
 “ artists are also excellent. Besides this, such  
 “ Germans as are most skilful in the several arts,  
 “ reside in England; and their merchants, who  
 “ visit many distant regions with their ships,  
 “ bring home from other countries the most  
 “ curious works of art of every kind †.”

Furs. Furs of various kinds were much used by persons of both sexes, and of all conditions, in lining their tunics and mantles, especially in the winter-season. Of this many proofs might be produced; but the following short anecdote from the life of Wulstan Bishop of Worcester will be sufficient. The holy bishop is thus celebrated by his biographer for the modesty and humility of his dress: “ He avoided all appearances of  
 “ pride and ostentation in his dress; for though

\* Asser. Vita Ælfredi, p. 8. Ethelwerdi Chron. l. 4. c. 3.

† Gesta Guillelmi Ducis, apud Duchén. p. 211.

“ he was very rich, he never made use of any  
 “ finer furs than those of lambs’ skins in lining  
 “ his garments. For this he was blamed one  
 “ day in conversation by one of his brethren,  
 “ Jeffrey Bishop of Constans, who asked him,  
 “ Why he used only the furs of lambs in his  
 “ garments, when he might and ought to use  
 “ those of sables, beavers, and foxes? To which  
 “ he returned this facetious answer: It is very  
 “ proper for you and other politicians, who are  
 “ skilled in all the tricks and artifices of the  
 “ world, to wear the spoils of those cunning  
 “ animals; but as I am a plain and artless man,  
 “ I am very well contented with the skins of  
 “ lambs. The other still insisting, that if he  
 “ would not use those finer furs, he might at  
 “ least use the furs of cats. Believe me, re-  
 “ plied Wulstan, my dear brother, *the lamb of*  
 “ *God* is much oftner sung in the church than  
 “ the cat of God. This witty answer threw the  
 “ whole company into a violent fit of laughter,  
 “ and put Bishop Jeffrey to silence\*.” This  
 anecdote, besides the purpose for which it is in-  
 troduced, may serve as a specimen of the wit of  
 those times.

It is not necessary to spend much time in de-<sup>Diet.</sup>  
 scribing the diet of the several nations of Britain  
 in this period. For these nations were not un-  
 practised in the arts of hunting, hawking, fish-  
 ing, pasturage, and agriculture; and conse-

\* Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 259.

quently were not unprovided with the various kinds of meats and drinks which are procured by these arts.

Of the  
Welsh,  
Scots, and  
Picts.

The people of Wales in this period, and even for some ages after, were very abstemious in their diet. “ They remain fasting from morning “ to night, being employed through the whole “ day in managing their affairs; and in the “ evening they take a moderate supper. If by “ any means they are disappointed of a supper, “ or get only a very slight one, they wait with “ patience till the succeeding evening, without “ taking any food. In the evening, when all “ the family and strangers are assembled, they “ make ready provisions according to the num- “ ber of the guests, and the abilities of the fa- “ mily; and in doing this they study only to “ satisfy the demands of nature, and not to pro- “ voke an appetite by the arts of cookery, by “ sauces, and a variety of dishes. When the “ supper is ready, a basket with vegetables is “ set before every three persons, and not before “ every two, as in other countries,—a large dish, “ with meat of various kinds, and sometimes “ a mess of broth or pottage. Their bread is “ thin and broad cakes, which are baked from “ day to day. They make no use of tables, “ table-cloths, or napkins. When strangers are “ at supper, the master and mistress of the house “ always serve them in person, and never taste “ any thing till their guests have finished their “ repast; that if there be any deficiency of pro-

“visions, it may fall to their own share\*.” This account is given by a Welshman, who was perfectly well acquainted with the manners and customs of his countrymen. It is highly probable, that the common people among the Scots and Picts, who were also descended from the ancient Britons, lived in the same manner in this period. It is proper, however, to take notice, that the people of rank and fortune, and particularly the princes of all these nations, lived in a more plentiful and less simple manner. The chief cooks of the king and queen were persons of considerable dignity in the courts of the kings of Wales, and made use of pepper, and other spice-ries, in seasoning the dishes for the royal table, which appear to have been numerous†. Two tables were daily covered in the king’s hall; at the first of which the king presided, and ten of the principal officers of the court were admitted to it: the second table was in the lower part of the hall, near the door, at which the master of the household, with three other principal officers, had their seats. At this second table were several empty places, for the reception of such as were degraded from the king’s table for their misbehaviour‡.

The ordinary drink of the common people in Scotland and Wales was water or milk; but persons of rank and fortune had a variety of fer-<sup>Their drinks.</sup>

\* Girald. Cambrens. Descriptio Cambriae, c. 10.

† Leges Wallicæ, p. 48. 55.

‡ Id. p. 13. 14. 15.

mented and intoxicating liquors, which they used with great freedom, and too often to excess. Mead was still one of their favourite liquors, and bore a high price; for a cask of mead, by the laws of Wales, was valued at one hundred and twenty pence, equal in quantity of silver to thirty shillings of our present money, and in efficacy to fifteen pounds \*. The dimensions of the cask are thus described by these laws: “The measure of a cask of mead must be nine palms in height, and so capacious as to serve the king, accompanied by one of his counsellors, for a bathing tub†.” By another law, its diameter is fixed at 18 palms. To provide the materials for making this liquor, every farmer, either of the king or of the nobility, was obliged to pay a part of his rent in honey‡. They had also two kinds of ale, called *common ale*, and *spiced ale*; and their value was thus ascertained by law: “If a farmer hath no mead, he shall pay two casks of spiced ale, or four casks of common ale, for one cask of mead||.” By this law, a cask of spiced ale, nine palms in height, and eighteen palms in diameter, was valued at a sum of money equal in efficacy to seven pounds ten shillings of our present money; and a cask of common ale, of the same dimensions, at a sum equal to three pounds fifteen shillings. This is a sufficient proof, that even common ale

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 178.† *Id.* p. 174.‡ *Id.* *ibid.*|| *Id.* *ibid.*



in this period was an article of luxury among the Welsh, which could only be obtained by the great and opulent. Wine seems to have been quite unknown even to the kings of Wales in this period, as it is not so much as once mentioned in their laws; though Giraldus Cambrensis, who flourished about a century after the conquest, acquaints us, that there was a vineyard, in his time, at Maenarper, near Pembroke, in South Wales\*.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes were very far from being so abstemious in their diet as the posterity of the ancient Britons; but rather verged towards the other extreme: for, instead of contenting themselves with one moderate meal a-day, they commonly took four full ones. Some of our monkish historians, who flourished after the conquest, speak with high relish of the good living at court in the Saxon and Danish times. "The kings," as it is said, "were then so generous and bountiful, that they commanded four royal banquets to be served up every day to all their courtiers; choosing rather to have much superfluity at their tables, than the least appearance of deficiency. But, alas! it is become the custom at court in our times to have only one entertainment a-day; out of politeness, as it is pretended, but in reality out of sordid parsimony†." The Anglo-

Diet of the  
Anglo-Sax-  
ons and  
Danes.

\* Girald. Cambrensis. Itinerarium Cambriae, l. i. c. 12.

† Hen. Hunt, l. 6.

Saxons and Danes, like their ancestors the ancient Germans, delighted much in feasting\*. Their nobles spent the greatest part of their revenues in making provision for the abundant and frequent feasts with which they regaled their friends and followers†. Their kings entertained all the great men of the kingdom for several days at each of the three festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, in the most sumptuous manner, and at a great expence‡. In a word, no meeting of any kind was held, and no business of importance was transacted, without a feast. These feasts were more remarkable for their abundance than for their elegance; and some kinds of provisions were then used which would not now be touched, but in the greatest extremities of famine. The Danish inhabitants of Northumberland, in particular, were fond of horse-flesh, which they devoured in great quantities||.

Their  
cooking.

The cookery of the English in this period, we may presume, was not very exquisite. It seems to have consisted chiefly, if not wholly, in the three operations of roasting, broiling, and boiling. The ancient Germans, and all the nations descended from them, delighted much in great joints of roasted meat; a taste which universally prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons of this period, and still prevails among the most robust

\* Tacit. de Morib; German. c. 14. 15.

† W. Malms. l. 3. p. 58.

|| Wilkins Concilia, t. 1. p. 147. 151.

‡ Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 199.

and manly of their posterity\*. Salted meats of all kinds were much used in those times at the tables of the great, and even at royal entertainments†.

As the Anglo-Saxons and Danes were at least as much addicted to intemperance in drinking as in eating, they were at much pains in providing plenty and variety of liquors for their entertainments. The liquors provided for a royal banquet, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, were wine, mead, ale, pigment, morat, and cyder‡. If wine was made in England in this period, it was only in small quantities, and therefore the greatest part of what was used was certainly imported. “Though Britain,” says an ancient historian, “abounds in so many things, it produceth but little wine, that those who desire to purchase her commodities may have something to give in exchange for them ||.” Wine, therefore, we may conclude, was both scarce and dear in Britain in this period, when trade was in its infancy. Mead was also one of the luxuries of life, and could only be procured by persons of considerable opulence. Ale was the favourite liquor of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, as it had been of their ancestors the ancient Germans§. Before their conversion to Christianity, they believed that drinking large and frequent draughts

\* Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 4. c. 13. Eginhart. a Schminkio edit. p. 113.

† Hen. Hunt. l. 6. p. 210.

‡ Id. ibid.

|| Id. l. 1. p. 171.

§ Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 23.

of ale was one of the chief felicities which those heroes enjoyed who were admitted into the hall of Odin \* : a sufficient proof of the high relish which these nations had for that liquor. This relish they retained to the end of this period ; and it is still retained by many of their posterity. Pigment (in Latin *pigmentum*) was one of the richest and most delicious liquors known in those times ; and so greatly admired, both in England and on the continent, that it was commonly called *nectar*. It is thus described by an ancient author :—“ Pigment is a sweet and odoriferous “ liquor, made of honey, wine, and spiceries of “ various kinds †.” Morat was also esteemed a delicacy, and was only found at the tables of the great. It was made of honey, diluted with the juice of mulberries ‡. Cyder is so well known, that it need not be described. Some other liquors are occasionally mentioned in the monuments of this period ; but it is not necessary to make this enumeration more complete ||.

Manner  
of sitting  
at table.

Among the ancient Germans every guest had a separate seat, and a little table by himself ; but their posterity, the Anglo-Saxons and Danes of this period, were seated on long benches, at large square tables §. This appears from many

\* Bartholin. de Causis contemptæ apud Danos Mortis, l. 2. c. 12. p. 541. 558.

† Joan. de Janua, Catholicum Parvum, apud du Cange, t. 5. p. 471.

‡ Du Cange Gloss. in voc. Moratum.

|| Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 98.

§ Tacit de Morib. German. c. 22.

passages in their history, and from the figure of the table at which Harold and his friends are represented dining in the tapestry of Bayeux \*. The guests were not permitted to take their places on these benches according to their own fancies, but according to an arrangement that was exactly settled and strictly observed. By the court laws of King Canute, the officers of his household, and all the nobility who dined at court, are commanded to take their places at table according to their rank, and those of the same rank according to their seniority in office; and if any one presumed to take too high a place, he was degraded to the lowest, and all the company were permitted to pelt him with bones, without being thought guilty of any rudeness, or liable to any challenge †. By the laws of Wales, which were probably copied in this particular from some Anglo-Saxon laws that are now lost, the places of all the great officers who were admitted to the royal table are ascertained with the most minute exactness ‡.

As persons of rank and fortune among the Anglo-Saxons and Danes never engaged in business, and could not amuse themselves with reading, they necessarily spent much of their time in diversions. These were of three kinds, Diversions.

\* Montfaucon Monumens de la Monarchie Française, t. 1. plate 35. p. 372.

† Leges Curiales Regis Canuti, apud Bartholin. p. 533.

‡ Leges Wallicæ, l. 1. passim.

viz.—martial exercises,—the sports of the field,  
—and domestic amusements.

Martial  
exercises.

War being the chief employment and great delight of the Anglo-Saxon thanes and their retainers, many of the diversions of their youth, and even of their riper years, were of a martial cast, consisting of running, swimming, leaping, riding, wrestling, and fighting \*. A young warrior thus recounts the exercises in which he had acquired dexterity by constant practice: “ I  
“ fight valiantly ; I sit firmly on horseback ; I  
“ am inured to swimming ; I know how to run  
“ along on scates ; I dart the lance ; and am  
“ skilful at the oar †.” The martial dance was the favourite diversion of the ancient Germans, and of their descendants the Anglo-Saxons. It is thus described by Tacitus: “ They have one  
“ public diversion which is constantly exhibited  
“ at all their meetings. Young men, who by  
“ frequent exercise have attained to great per-  
“ fection in this pastime, strip themselves, and  
“ dance among the points of swords and spears  
“ with the most wonderful agility, and even with  
“ the most elegant and graceful motions. These  
“ young gentlemen do not perform this martial  
“ dance for hire, but for the entertainment of  
“ the spectators, whose applause they esteem a  
“ sufficient reward ‡.” In a word, the ancient inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavia, and the

\* Northern Antiquities, t. 1. p. 197.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 24.

† Id. ibid. p. 238.

nations descended from them, delighted so much in these martial exercises, that they imagined they constituted the chief amusement and felicity of those heroes who were admitted into Valhalla, the place of future happiness. “Tell me,” says Gangler, “how do the heroes divert themselves when they are not engaged in drinking?” “Every day,” replies Har, “as soon as they have dressed themselves, they take their arms, and entering the lists, fight till they cut one another in pieces. This is their diversion. But no sooner does the hour of repast approach, than they remount their horses, all safe and sound, and return to drink in the palace of Odin \*.” Such readers as desire to see a very prolix description of the military dances and other martial diversions of the ancient Danes, Anglo-Saxons, and other nations of Europe, in this period, may consult the works quoted below †. It was from these martial diversions that the tournaments of the middle ages, which will be delineated in our sixth volume, derived their origin. Horse-races may be reckoned one of the diversions of the English in this period. Among the magnificent presents that were made to King Athelstan, by Adulphus, ambassador of Hugh King of France, when he demanded his sister, the Princess Edelswitha, for his master, we are told,—“there were

\* Bartholin. p. 564.

† *Historia Olai Magni*, l. 15. p. 573—585. Muratori, t. 2. *Dissertat.* 29.

“ several running horses, with their saddles, and  
 “ bits of yellow gold in their mouths \*.” This  
 is a sufficient proof, that such horses were admired  
 and used in England at that time.

Sports of  
 the field.

The sports of the field were the favourite diversions of the Anglo-Saxons, and Danes, and other British nations, in this period; and in these sports persons of rank and fortune spent the greatest part of their time when they were not engaged in war. Such rural diversions were admirably adapted to give delight to a people of great activity and spirit, who enjoyed much leisure, and lived constantly in an open country, abounding in game of all kinds, which seemed to solicit their pursuit. Accordingly they considered hawking and hunting as the two principal branches of a royal and noble education, the most admired accomplishments, and most honourable employments of kings and princes. Alfred the Great was taught to hunt before he was taught to read; and his friend and historian Asser speaks of his superior skill in all the sports of the field in a kind of rapture! “ Before he was twelve  
 “ years of age, he was a most expert and active  
 “ hunter, and excelled in all the branches of that  
 “ most noble art, to which he applied with incessant labour, and amazing success. For his  
 “ felicity in hunting, as well as in all the other  
 “ gifts of God, was really incomparable, as I  
 “ myself have often seen †.” Edward the Con-

\* W. Malm. l. 2. c. 6.

† Asser. Vita Ælfredi, a Camden. edit. p. 5.



fessor's fondness for these exercises of hunting and hawking is thus described by his historian: "There was only one diversion in which he took the greatest possible delight, *viz.* to follow a pack of swift hounds in pursuit of their game, and to cheer them with his voice, or to attend the flights of hawks taught to pursue and catch their kindred birds. Every day, after divine service, he took the field, and spent his time in these beloved sports \*." The figure of a hawk upon the left hand was the mark by which the painters of those times distinguished persons of high rank, of both sexes, from their inferiors; which is a sufficient proof, that their fondness for, and frequent use of that bird, was universally known †. So great a value did the princes and nobility of Europe in this period set upon their hawks, that they constantly carried them with them in all their journies, and sometimes into battle, and would not part with them even to procure their own liberty, when they were taken prisoners ‡. The truth is, to resign his hawk was one of the most dishonourable actions of which a nobleman could be guilty, and was considered as a voluntary resignation of his nobility. Dogs of sport of all kinds were also the favourites and constant companions of the great in this period; and a prodigious num-

\* W. Malms. l. 2. c. 13.

† Memoires des Inscriptions, t. 9. p. 542.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

ber of laws were made to prevent their being killed or stolen \*.

Game laws.

When kings, princes, and nobles, took so much delight in the diversions of the field, we may be almost certain that they endeavoured to secure them to themselves, and to prevent their inferiors from sharing with them in the pleasure of those admired amusements. Of this we have the clearest evidence, in the forest or game laws of Canute the Great, which are still extant. By these laws, certain magistrates or judges are appointed in every county to take cognisance of all trespasses committed within the limits of the royal forests; and certain inferior officers or gamekeepers are constituted to apprehend those who were guilty of such trespasses. Thanes, bishops, and abbots, are permitted to hunt in the king's chaces; but the penalties and punishments inflicted on unqualified persons who were guilty of hunting, or even disturbing the game, are very severe. By one of these laws, if a gentleman, or inferior thane, killed a stag in a royal forest, he was degraded, and deprived of his arms; if a ceorl killed one, he was reduced to slavery; and if a slave killed one, he was put to death. By another of these laws, all proprietors of lands are declared to have a right to hunt within their own lands; but not to pursue their game into any of the royal chaces †.

\* Lindenbrog, p. 384, 385—435, 436. *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 249, &c.

† *Constitutiones Canuti Regis de Foresta*, apud Spelman. *Gloss.* p. 140. 141. 142. Wilkin. *Leges Saxon.* p. 146.

Though the martial and rural sports above <sup>Domestic</sup> described enabled the kings, princes, and nobles <sup>games.</sup> of this period, to spend a considerable part of their time in a very agreeable manner; yet as these sports could only be pursued in the day-time, in favourable weather, and when they were in health, they stood in need of some domestic diversions to fill up the remainder of their vacant hours. These domestic diversions were the more necessary, because very few were then capable of amusing themselves with reading, writing, and study; and because they were not furnished with various topics of conversation, with public spectacles, and with other ingenious arts of killing time, which have been since invented. It was probably such circumstances as these that rendered the ancient Germans, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, so immoderately fond of games of chance. “ At dice they play, which “ is wonderful, when they are perfectly cool “ and sober, with such keenness and temerity, “ that after they have lost all their money and “ goods, they venture their very persons and “ liberties on one desperate throw. He who “ loseth, tamely submits to servitude; and “ though both younger and stronger than his “ antagonist, patiently permits himself to be “ bound and sold in the market. This madness “ they dignify with the name of *honour* \*.”— We have good reason to believe, that similar

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 27.

circumstances produced similar effects in their descendants the Anglo-Saxons in England in this period, though not perhaps in such an extreme degree; because the church discouraged games of chance, and prohibited the use of them to the clergy \*. When bishop Ætheric obtained admission to Canute the Great about midnight, upon some urgent business, he found the king and his courtiers engaged at play, some at dice, and others at chess †. When a young nobleman applied to a father for permission to pay his addresses to his daughter, the parent, it is said, commonly made a trial of his temper, by playing with him at dice and chess, before he gave him an answer ‡. The game of backgammon, it is pretended; was invented in Wales in this period, and derives its names from the two Welsh words, *bach*, “little,” and *cammon*, “battle ||.” But it is quite unnecessary to be more particular in our enumeration of these domestic amusements, of which many are probably quite forgotten and lost.

\* Johnson's Canons, A. D. 960. can. 64.

† Hist. Ramsiens. a Gale edit. c. 85.

‡ Hist. Olai Magni, p. 572.

|| Gloss. ad Leges Wallicas, a voc. Tawlbwrdd.

# APPENDIX

## TO THE

### SECOND BOOK.

---

#### NUMBER I.

A Map of Britain according to the Saxon Chronicle.

#### NUMBER II.

The Saxon Names of Places in the Preceding Map, in alphabetical Order, with an Explanation of their Meaning, and their present English Names \*.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning †.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
A		
Abban-dun	Abbey-hill	Abingdon, Berks
Ace-man's-ceaster	Sick-man's-city	Bath, Somersetsh.
Ac-lea	Oak-field	Okely, Surry
Acsan-minster	Ax-abbey	Axminster, Devon.
Ædwines-clife	Edwin's-rock	Not certainly known
Ægeles-byrig	Egel's-town	Ailesbury, Bucks
Ægeles-ford	Egel's-ford	Ailesford, Kent
Ægeles-wurthe	Egel's-worth	Ecclesworth, Northampt.
Ælfet-ée	Elfet's-island	Not certainly known

---

\* I once intended to have subjoined a commentary to this alphabetical catalogue of the names of places, explaining the reasons of the meanings given to these names, and producing authorities in support of these reasons; but this became so voluminous, that it could not be inserted.

† When the meaning is unknown or uncertain, the original word is put in this column.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Ælm	Elm	Elm, in Ely
Æscet-dun	Ash-hill	Aston, Berks
Æsc-tun	Ash-town	Ashton, Northampt.
Æst-fild	East-field	East-field, Northampt.
Æst-tun	Est-town	Easton, Northamp.
Ætsing-stoce	Etsing's-stock	Tavistock, Devon
Æthan-dun	[ter Ethan's-hill	Eddington, Wiltsh.
Æthelbrihte's mins-	Ethelbert's-church	In Hereford
Æthelhund-iglund	Ethelhun's-island	Not known
Æthelinga-dene	Noble's-valley	Alton, Hampsh.
Æthelinga-igge	Noble's island	Athelney, Somersetsh.
Afene	Avon	Avon river
Afene-mouth	Avon-mouth	Avon's-mouth
S. Albane	St Alban	St Alban's, Hertfordsh.
Aldewingle	Old-winkle	Oldwinkle, Northampt.
Ambresbyri	Amber's town	Ambersbury, Wiltsh.
Ancar-ig	Hermit's-island	Thorney-isle, Cambridgesh.
Andefira	Andefira	Andover, Hampsh.
Andredes-leag	Andred's-pasture	The Weald, Kent
Andred ceaster	Andred's-city	Not certainly known
Angel-cynnes-lond	Angles-nation-land	England
Angles-egc	Angles-island	Anglesey
Apuldre	The Sea-march	Appledore, Kent
Arundel	Arundel	Arundel, Sussex
Arwan	Arwan	River Orwel
Assan-dun	[ter Ass-hill	Assington, Essex
S. Augustine's-mins-	St Augustine's church	St Austin's, Canterbury

## B

Baccanceld	Baccanceld	Beckenham, Kent
Baddan-byric	Baddan's-town	Badbury, Dorsetsh.
Badecan-willa	Badecan's-well	Bakewell, Derbysh.
Barwe	Barwe	Barrow, Rutlandsh.
Basing	A mantle	Basing, Hampsh.
Bathan-cester	Bathing-city	Bath, Somersetsh.
Beam-clune	Beam-hill	Bampton, Devonsh.
Beam-fleot	Beam-hay	Bemflete, Essex
Bearthanig	Bearthanig	Bardney, Lincolnsh.
Bearwicscire	Box-division	Berkshire
Bebbanburh	Bebba's-town	Bamburgh, Northumberland
Bedan-ford	Bedan's-ford	Bedford
Bedan-ford-scirc	Bedan's-ford-division	Bedfordshire
Bedan-heafde	Bedan's-head	Bedwin, Wiltsh.
Benefica	Benefica	A river in Hertfordsh.
Benning-tun	Benning's-town	Bennington, Hertfordsh.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Beofer-lic	Beaver-like	Beverly, Yorks.
Beorc-lea	Birch-field	Barkley, Gloucestersh.
Beorg-ford	Hill-ford	Burford, Oxfordsh. [ans
Beornicas	People of Bernicia	Bernicians, or Northumbri-
Beran-byrig	Beran-town	Banbury, Oxfordsh.
Bolhithe-goat	Bolhithe's gate	Bulldikegate, Peterborow
Bosenham	Wood-house	Bosham, Sussex
Bradán-æ	Broad-river	Not known, Cambridgesh.
Bradán-relic	Broad-island	Stepholme, in the Severn
Bradán-ford	Broad-ford	Bradford, Wiltsh. [nock
Bricenan-mere	Bricenan's-pool	Bricknockmere, near Brick-
Brædine	Broad-valley	Bredon-forest, Wiltsh.
Brent-ford	Brent-ford	Brentford, Middlesex
Breodune	Bread-hill	Not known
Breodun	Bread-hill	Briedon, Worcestersh.
Briten-lond	Briton's-land	Britain
Brig-stow	Bridge-place	Bristol
Brigge	Bridge	Bridgenorth, Shropsh.
Brunanburh	Brown-town	Uncertain
Buccingham	Beech-tree-town	Buckingham
Buccingham-scire	Beech-tree-town-divi.	Buckinghamshire
Burh	Town or city	Peterburgh, Northamp.
Burnewudu	Burnt-wood	Bernwood-forest, Bucks
Butting-tun	Near-river-town	Buttington, Shropsh.
Byferes-stan	Beavers-stone	Beverston, Gloucestersh.
Byrtune	Bear-town	Burton, Staffordsh..

## C

Cære	Care	Carehouse, Northumb.
Calne	Calne	Calne, Wiltsh.
Caninganmerses	Caningans-marshes	Cannington, Somersetsh.
Cant-wara-burh	Kentishmen's-town	Canterbury
Carleol	Carleol	Carlisle, Cumberland
Carrum	Carrum	Charmouth, Dorsetsh.
Castra	Camp	Castor, Northamptonsh.
Cealc-hythe	Chalk-port	Uncertain
Ceaster	Camp	West-Chester
Cent	Cent	Kent
Ceorles-ige	Ceorl's-island	Chertsey, Surry
Cerdices-ford	Cerdic's-ford	Charford, Hampsh.
Cerdices-leag	Cerdic's-field	Chardsley, Buckinghamsh.
Cerdicesora	Cerdic's-shore	Charmouth, Dorsetsh.
Cice	Chich	St Osythe, Essex
Cingestun	King's-town	Kingston, Surry
Cissaccaster	Cissa's-city	Chichester, Sussex

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Clenceaster	Clew-city	Gloucester
Cleftun	Cliff's-towns	Clifton, Dorsetsh.
Clitern	Clitern	Chilternhills, Oxfordsh.
Clive	Cliff	Clyff, Northamptonsh.
Cloveshooh	Cloveshoe	Abingdon, Berkshire
Colne	Colne	River Colne, Essex
Colnecaster	Colne-city	Colchester, Essex
Coludesburh	Colud's-city	Coldingham, Merse
Corfe's-geate	Corf's-gate	Corfe-castle, Purbecke
Cosham	Choice-house	Cosham, Wiltsh.
Costerford	Tempter's-ford	Cosford, Warwicksh.
Cotingham	Coting's-house	Cottingham, Northamptonsh
Couentre	Couentre	Coventry, Warwicksh.
Cræcelade	Creek's-stream	Creeklade, Wiltsh.
Crecianford	Creek's-ford	Crayford, Kent
Crediantum	Credy-town	Kirton, Devonsh.
Croyland	Croyland	Crowland, Lincolnsh.
Cumbraland	Cumbre's-country	Cumberland
Cevichelmes-hleawe	Cuechelm's-mount	Cuckamsley-hill, Berks
Cymenes-ora	Cymen's-shore	Cimenshore, Sussex
Cynemæresford	King's-famous-ford	Kempshford, Gloucestersh.
Cynet	Kenet	Kennet, Wiltsh.
Cyninges-clife	King's-cliff	Unknown, Northumb.
Cyppanham	Merchant-town	Chippenham, Wiltsh.
Cyrenceaster	Ceres-city	Cirencester, Gloucestersh.
Cyricbyrig	Church-town	Cherbury, Shropsh.

## D

Dæg-stan	Degsa's-stone	Dawston, Cumberland
S. David	St. David's	St. David's, Pembrokh.
Deoraby	Deer's-place	Derby
Deorham	Deer's-home	Durham, Gloucestersh.
Derawuda	Deer's-wood	Beverly, Yorksh.
Dodesthorp	Dod's-farm	Dostroy, Northamptonsh.
Domuc	Domuc	Dunwich, Suffolk
Doreceaster	Water-city	Dorchester, Oxfordsh.
Driffelda	Dry-field	Driffeld, Yorksh.
Dunstaple	Hill-staple	Dunstable, Bedfordsh.
Dunholdm	Hill and valley	Durham

## E

Eadesbyrig	Eades-town	Eddesbury, Chesh.
Eadmundesbyrig	Edmund's-town	Bury, Suffolk
Eadulfes næsse	Edulf's-point	Ness, Essex
East Engle	East England	Cambridgesh. Suffolk, Nor- [folk



<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
East-Seaxe	East Saxony	Essex, &c.
Egbrightes-stan	Egbright's-stone	Brixton, Wiltsh.
Ege	The eye	Eyre, Northamptonsh.
Egonesham	Egon's-home	Ensham, Oxfordsh.
Ellendun	Strong-hill	Wilton, Wiltsh.
Elig	Eel-isle	Ely
Englafilda	English-field	Inglefield, Berks
Englaland	English-land	England
Eofer-wic	Urie-castle	York
Esendic	Esen's-dike	Assendike, Cambridgesh.
Estun	East-town	Easton, Leicestersh.
Euesham	Eves's-home	Evesham, Worcestersh.
Exan-ceaster	Ex-city	Exeter, Devonsh.
Exan-muth	Exmouth	Exmouth, Devonsh.
<b>F</b>		
Fauresfield	Fore-field	Feversham, Kent
Fearndun	Fern-hill	Farringdon, Berks
Fearnham	Fern-place	Farnham, Surrey
Fethanleag	Army-field	Frithern, Gloucestersh.
Fenchamstede	Fincham's-stead	Finchamsted, Berks
Folces-stan	People's-stone	Folkston, Kent
Fromuth	Froom-mouth	Pool, Dorsetsh.
Fullanham	Foul-town	Fulham, Middlesex
<b>G</b>		
Gaful-ford	Toll-ford	Camelford, Cornwall
Gegnesburgh	Tribe's-town	Gainsburrow, Lincolnsh.
Gildeneburgh	Gilded-town	Peterburrow
Gillingaham	Gillings-home	Gillingham, Dorsetsh.
Glastingbyri	Glass-town	Glassenbury, Somersetsh.
Grantebridge	Grant's-bridge	Cambridge
Grena-wic	Green-town	Greenwich, Kent
Gypes-which	Gipping's town	Ipswich, Suffolk
<b>H</b>		
Hefe	High	Heifild
Hestingas	Danish-town	Hastings, Sussex
Hagustaldesham	Hestild-town	Hexham, Northum.
Ham-tun	Home-town	Northampton, Southampton
Hamton-scyre	Home-town-division	Hampshire
Hamstide	Home-stede	Hamsted, Berks
Hean-byrig	Poor-town	Swineshead, Hunt.
Heat-fild	Hot-field	Hatfield, Hertfordsh.
Hengestesdun	Hengist's-hill	Hengstonhill, Cornw.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Heort-ford	Hart's-ford	Hert-ford
Heort-ford-scyre	Hart's-ford-division	Hertfordsh.
Herc-ford	Army's-ford	Hereford
Here-ford-scyre	Army's-ford-division	Herefordsh.
Hethfeld	High-field	Hatfield, Yorkshire.
Hlida-ford	Lids-ford	Lidford, Devonsh.
Hocneratun	Hocneratown	Hogsnorton, Oxfordsh.
Hreopan-dun	Crying-hill	Repton, Derbysh.
Hrippun	Harvest-town	Rippon, Yorksh.
Hrofes-ceaster	Covered-castle	Rochester, Kent
Humber	Humber	River Humber
Hundhodge	Hounds-house	Huncot, Leicestersh.
Huntendune	Hunters-downs	Huntington
Huntendune-scyre	Hunters-down-divi-	Huntingtonsh.
Hweallæge	Whale-isle	Whaley, Lancashire
Hwerewille	Whirl-well	Whorwell, Hampsh.
Hwit-cerc	White-church	White-church, Hampsh.
Hwitrne	White-place	Whatern, Gallaway
Hyrtingberi	Farmers-town	Irthlington, Northampt.
Hythe	Haven	Hyth, Kent

## I

Icanhoe	Icanhoe	Boston, Lincolnsh.
Idle	Empty	Rivulet Idle, Nottinghamsh.
Iglea	Island field	Unknown
Ircingafild	Ircing's field	Archinfield, Herefordsh.

## K

Ketering	Ketering	Kettering, Northampt.
Kyntlingtun	Kyntling's-town	Kirtlington, Oxfordsh.

## L

Lambhythe	Clay-haven	Lambete, Surry.
Lægeceaster	Legion-city	West-Ceste.
Legerceaster	Leire-city	Leicester
Lægrceasterscyre	Leire-city divison	Leicestershire
Licetfeld	Corps field	Litchfield, Staffordsh.
Liga	Liga	The River Lea.
Ligtun	Lame-town	Leighton, Bedfordsh.
Limenemuth	Lime-mouth	Lime, Kent
Lincolne	Lake-colony	Lincoln
Lincolnescyre	Lake-colony-division	Lincolnshire
Lindesfarna-ca	Lind-people's-isle	Holy-island
Lindesige	Marsh-isle	Linsey Lincolnsh
Lothene	Army-province	Lothian, Scotland

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Lundine	Lundine	London
Legeanburh	Lea-town	Leighton, Bedfordsh.
M		
Mældun	Cross-hill	Maldon, Essex
Mænige	Man-island	Anglesey
Mærlebeorge	Marle-town	Marlborough, Wiltsh.
Malveisin	Bad-neighbour	Bamborow-castle
Menigceister	Many-castle	Manchester, Lancash.
Maserfeld	Merchant-field	Oswistre, Shropsh.
Mealdelmesbyrig	Maildelm's-town	Malmsbury, Wiltsh.
Medeshamstede	Whirlpool-place	Peterburgh, Northamptonsh.
Medigwæg	Fair-river	River Medway
Merantun	Mire-town	Merton, Surry
Meresiege	March-island	Marsey, Essex
Michaelstow	Michael's-place	St. Michael's-mount, Cornw.
Middle-Anglas	Middle-English	Warwicksh. Staffordsh. &c.
Middle-seaxe	Middle-Saxony	Middlesex
Middle-tun	Middle-town	Middleton, Essex
Muntgumni	Gomer's-mount	Montgomery
N		
Næsse	The point	Ness-point, Kent
Natanleag	Natan's-field	Natly, Hampsh.
Nen	Nen	River Nen, Northampt.
S. Neod	St. Neot's	St. Neot's, Huntingdonsh.
Northburh	North-town	Norbury, Northampt.
North-folc	North-people	Norfolk
Northumtun	North-home-town	Northampton
North-muth	North-mouth	Buoy in the Nore
Northan-hymbras	North-humbrians	Northumbrians
Northanhymbra-land	North-humber-land	Northumberland
North-wealas	North-Welsh	People of North-Wales
North-wic	North-castle	Norwich
O		
Olan-ege	Olan's-island	Olney
Ottan-ford	Ottan's ford	Orford, Kent
Oxnaford	Oxen's-ford	Oxford
Oxnafordscyre	Oxen's-ford-division	Oxfordshire
P		
Passanham	Passan's-home	Pasham, Northampt.
Pastun	Pass-town	Paston, Northampt.
Peaclond	Peak-land	The Peak, Derbysh.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Pedridan	Pedridan	Parret-river, Somersetsh.
Pen-wight-streot	Head-island-point	The Land's end, Cornw.
Peonho	Head-Hecl	Pen, Somersetsh.
Pevenesea	Peven-sea	Pemsey, Sussex
Perseora	Pers-shore	Pershore, Worcestersh.
Pencanheal	Pencan's-hall	Finkley, Durham
Port	The Port	Portland, Dorsetsh.
Porteloca	Harbour-bar	Portlock-bay, Somersetsh.
Portsmouth	Harbour's-mouth	Portsmouth, Hampsh.
Possentesbyrig	Possent's-town	Pontesbury, Shropsh.
Pruntesflod	Private's-flood	Prevet, Hampsh.

## R

Raculf	Roe's-cliff	Reculver, Kent
Reading	Flint-meadows	Reading, Berksh.
Rihala	Rough-hall	Ryall, Rutlandsh.
Rogingham	Roging's-home	Rockingham, Northampt.
Rugenore	Rugged-shore	Rowner, Hampsh.
Rumcofa	Roomy-cave	Runkhorn, Chesh.
Rumensea	Spacious-sea	Rumney, Kent.
Rumesiege	Roomy-island	Rumsey, Hampsh.

## S

Sæferne	Sea-flowing	River Severn
Sandwic	Sandy-port	Sandwich, Kent
Scaftesbyrig	Shaft's-town	Shaftesbury, Dorsetsh.
Sceapige	Sheep's-island	Sheppey, Kent
Sceobyrig	Shoe-town	Shobery, Essex
Sceraburn	Clear-burn	Sherburn, Dorsetsh.
Scotland	Scotch-land	Scotland
Scrobbesby	Shrub-town	Shroesbury
Sealwudu	Willow-wood	Selwood, Somersetsh.
Searbyrig	Sharp-river-town	Salisbury, Wiltsh.
Sec-candun	Battle-town	Seckington, Warwicksh.
Seletun	Seal-town	Silton, Yorksh.
Sempigaham	Sempiga's-home	Sempringham, Lincolnsh.
Sliowaford	Sliowa's-ford	Sleaford, Lincolnsh.
Snawdun	Snow-hill	Snowdon hills
Snotingaham	Cave-town	Nottingham
Snotingaham-scyre	Cave-town-division	Nottinghamshire
Soccabyrig	Soke-town	Stocburn, Durham
Stæfford	Staff-ford	Stafford
Stæfford-scyre	Staff-ford-division	Staffordshire
Stane	Stone	Stains, Middlesex
Stanford	Stone-ford	Stamford, Lincolnsh.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Stanfordesbryege	Stone-ford-bridge	Stamford-bridge
Stanwic	Stone-town	Stanwixs, Northampt.
Streonsheale	Beacon-bay	Whitby, Yorksh.
Stretford	Streetford	Stratford, Warwicksh.
Sturemuth	Stour-mouth	Harwich
Sumurtun	Summer-town	Sumerton, Somersetsh.
Somersetscyre	Summer-seat-division	Somersetshire
Suthberi	South-town	Sudbury, Suffolk
Suth-folc	South-people	Suffolk
Suthrig	South-river-country	Surry
Suth-Seaxe	South-Saxony	Surry and Suffolk
Swanwic	Swaine-town	Swanwick, Hampsh.
Swineshæfed	Swine's-head	Swineshead, Huntingdonsh.

## T

Tamanweorthege	Tame-farm-island	Tamworth, Staffordsh.
Tame	Tame	Tame, Oxfordsh.
Tantun	Twig-town	Taunton, Somersetsh.
Temese	Water-tract	The river Thames
Temesford	Thames-ford	Temsford, Bedfordsh.
Tenet	Tenet	The isle of Thanet, Kent
Thælwæle	Stake-wall	Thelwell, Chesh.
Theodford	People's-ford	Thetford
Thorneic	Thorny-isle	Thorney, Cambridgesh.
Thorp	The village	Thorpe, Northamptonsh.
Trokenholt	Drag-boat-wood	Trokenhole, Cambridgesh.
Tina	Tina	River Tyne, Northumb.
Tinamuth	Tina's-mouth	Tinmouth, Northumb.
Tofceaster	Tof-castle	Toceter, Northampt.
Tonebridge	Town-bridge	Tunbridge, Kent
Treonta	Crooked-river	The river Trent
Turcesige	Boat-island	Torksey
Tweona	Two-burn-town	Christ-church, Hampsh.

## U

Undale	Undivided	Oundle, Northampt.
Usa	Water	River Ouse

## W

Wærham	Inclosed-town	Warham, Dorsetsh.
Wæringwic	Fortified-town	Warwick
Wæringscyre	Fortified-town-divis.	Warwickshire
Wætlingstræt	Beggars-street	Watling-street
Waltun	Wall-town	Walton, Northampt.
Wealingford	Wall-ford	Wallingford, Berksh.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Wealtham	Wood-town	Unknown
Weardbyrig	Guard-town	Wardborow, Oxfordsh.
Wecedport	Weced's-harbour	Watchet, Somersetsh.
Welmesfort	Sole-foot-ford	Walmsford, Northampt.
Weolud	Weolud	River Welland
Wermington	Warm-town	Warmington, Northampt.
Westmoringland	West-mountain-land	Westmorland
Westmynster	West-monastery	Westminster
West-Seaxe	West Saxon	Kingdom of Wessex
Westanwudu	Western wood	Westwood, Wiltsh.
Wetmor	Wet-moor	Wedmore, Somersetsh.
Webbandun	Worm-hill	Wimbleton, Surry
Wegeraceaster	War-castle	Worcester
Wegeraceasterscyre	War-castle-division	Worcestershire
Wegengamere	War-mere	Wigmore, Herefordsh.
Wihltland	Creature-land	Isle of Wight
Wihrtgarabyrig	Wightgar's-town	Caresbrook-castle
Wiltun	Willow-town	Wilton, Wiltsh.
Wiltonscyre	Willow-town-divis.	Wiltshire
Windlesora	Winding-shore	Windsor
Wintanceaster	Venta Castle	Winchester
Winmidfild	Victory-field	Near Leeds
Wirhealc	Myrtle-corner	Wirral, Chesh.
Wisebec	Wise-book	Wisbech
Witham	Near-town	Witham, Essex
Withlringtun	Withring's-town	Wirrington, Northampt.
Witlesmere	Wittlesey-mere	Withsmere, Cambridgesh.
Wodnesbeorge	Woden's-town	Wodensburgh, Wiltsh.
Wudestoke	Wood-place	Woodstock, Oxfordsh.
Wudiham	Woody-town	Odiam, Hampsh.
Wippedsfloat	Wipped's frith	Wippedsfleet, Kent.

## NUMBER III.

A specimen of the most ancient Anglo-Saxon laws, translated from the original Saxon into English \*.

*The laws of Ethelbert, the first Christian King of Kent, who reigned from A. D. 561, to A. D. 616.*

1. **LET** sacrilege be compensated twelvefold; the theft of the goods of a bishop, elevenfold; of the goods of a priest, ninefold; of those of a deacon, sixfold; of those of a clerk, threefold; the violation of the peace of a church, twofold; and that of a monastery, twofold. No. III.

2. If the king call an assembly of his people, and any damage be done to them there, let it be repaid twofold, and fifty shillings be paid to the king.

3. If the king is at an entertainment in any one's house, and any damage be done there, let it be compensated twofold.

4. If a freeman steal any thing from the king, let him compensate it ninefold.

5. Let him that killeth a man in the city of the king, be amerced in fifty shillings.

6. Let him that killeth a freeman pay fifty shillings to the king, for his loss of a subject.

7. If any one kill the servants of the king's master-smiths or butler, let him pay the ordinary mulct.

8. Let the violation of the king's patronage be compensated with fifty shillings.

\* See the original Saxon, with a Latin translation and notes, in Wilkin. *Leges Anglo-Saxonice*, p. 1—7.

No. III.

9. If a freeman steal any thing from a freeman, let him repay it threefold ; let a mulct be imposed, and all his goods confiscated to the king.

10. If a man lie with the king's maid-servant, being a virgin, let him compensate her virginity with fifty shillings.

11. If she be a grinding-maid, let the compensation be twenty-five shillings ; if of the third rank, twelve.

12. Let the violation of the chastity of the king's victualling-maid be compensated with twenty shillings.

13. Let him that killeth a man in the city of an earl, be amerced in twelve shillings.

14. If a man lie with a maid that is an earl's cup-bearer, let him compensate her virginity with twelve shillings.

15. Let the violation of the patronage of a yeoman be compensated with six shillings.

16. Be the violation of the chastity of a maid that is a yeoman's cup-bearer compensated with six shillings ; that of a yeoman's other maid-servant, with fifty scætas ; and of those of the third rank, thirty scætas.

17. Let him that first breaketh into another man's house be amerced in six shillings, the second in three shillings, and each of the rest in one shilling.

18. If any one lend a man arms where there is a quarrel, though no harm be done thereby, let him be amerced in six shillings.

19. If a robbery be committed, be it compensated with six shillings.

20. But if a man be killed, let the murderer compensate his death with twenty shillings.

21. If a man kill another, be the ordinary mulct of an hundred shillings imposed upon him.

22. If a man kill another at an open grave, let him compensate his death with twenty shillings, besides the ordinary mulct, which he must pay within forty days.



23. If the homicide fly his country, let his relations pay half the ordinary mulct. No. III.

24. Let him that bindeth a freeman make a compensation of twenty shillings.

25. Let the murderer of a yeoman's guest compensate his death with six shillings.

26. But if the landlord killeth his chief guest, let him compensate his death with eighty shillings.

27. If he kills the second, let him make a compensation of sixty shillings; if the third, of forty.

28. If a freeman cut down a hedge, let him make a compensation of six shillings.

29. If a man take away a thing kept within a house, let him compensate it threefold.

30. If a freeman break over a hedge, let him make a compensation of four shillings.

31. Let him that killeth a man make compensation, according to the true valuation, in current money.

32. If a freeman lie with a freeman's wife, let him make amends for his crime, by buying another wife for the injured party.

33. If a man prick another in the right thigh, let him compensate the same.

34. If he catches him by the hair, let him pay fifty scætas.

35. If the bone appear, let him make a compensation of three shillings.

36. If the bone be hurt, let him make a compensation of four shillings.

37. If the bone be broke, let him make a compensation of ten shillings.

38. If both be done, let him make a compensation of twenty shillings.

39. If the shoulder be lamed, be it compensated with twenty shillings.

40. If he is made deaf of an ear, let twenty-five shillings compensate it.

41. If the ear be cut off, be it compensated with twelve shillings.

42. If the ear be bored through, let three shillings be the compensation.

No. III.

43. If the ear be clipped off, be six shillings the compensation.

44. If the eye be struck out, let fifty shillings compensate it.

45. If the mouth or eye be injured, let twelve shillings make a compensation.

46. If the nose be bored through, let nine shillings be the compensation.

47. If but one membrane is bored through, be three shillings the compensation.

48. If both, be six shillings the compensation.

49. If both nostrils are slit, let each be compensated by six shillings.

50. If bored, by six shillings.

51. Let him that cutteth off the chin-bone make a compensation of twenty shillings.

52. For each of the four fore-teeth be compensated six shillings; for the one that stands next, four shillings; for the next, three shillings; and for each of the rest, one shilling: if it be an impediment to his speech, be twelve shillings compensated; and if the jaw-bone be broke, six shillings.

53. Be the bruising of a man's arm compensated with six shillings, and the breaking of it with six shillings.

54. If the thumb be cut off, let it be compensated with twenty shillings; the nail of the thumb, with three shillings; the fore-finger, with eight shillings; the mid-finger, with four shillings; the ring finger, with six shillings; the little finger, with eleven shillings.

55. For each nail, a shilling.

56. For the least blemish, three shillings; and for greater ones, six shillings.

57. If any one give another a blow on the nose with his fist, three shillings.

58. If it be wounded, one shilling.

59. If the stroke be black without the clothes, let it be compensated with thirty scætas; if within the clothes, with twenty scætas.

60. If the diaphragm be wounded, let it be compensated by twelve shillings, if bored, by twenty.

61. If one is made to halt, let it be compensated by thirty shillings.

62. If one wound the callus, let thirty shillings be the recompense. No. III.

63. If a man's privy member be cut off, let it be compensated by thrice the ordinary mulct; if it is bored, by six shillings; if cut, by six shillings.

64. If a man's thigh be broke, let twelve shillings be the recompense; if it is lamed, let the friends judge.

65. If a rib be broke, let it be compensated with three shillings.

66. If the thigh be pricked, for every prick be paid six shillings; if it be an inch deep, one shilling; if two inches, two shillings; if above three inches, three shillings.

67. If a vertebra be wounded, let it be compensated with three shillings.

68. If the foot be cut off, with fifty shillings.

69. If the great toe be cut off, with ten shillings.

70. For each of the rest of the toes, be paid half the price, as is enacted of the fingers.

71. Let thirty scætas compensate the nail of the great toe, and ten scætas each of the rest.

72. If a free-woman, wearing her hair, do any thing dishonourable, let her compensate it by thirty shillings.

73. Let the compensation of a virgin be the same as that of a freeman.

74. Let the violation of the patronage of the chief widow of a noble family be compensated with fifty shillings; of the next, with twenty; of the third, by twelve; and of the fourth, by six.

75. If a man marry a widow who is not at her own disposal, let him twice compensate the violated patronage.

76. If a man buy a maid with his money, let her stand for bought, if there is no fraud in the bargain; but if there be, let her be returned home, and the purchaser's money restored him.

77. If she bring forth any live issue, let her have half of the man's goods, if he die first.

78. If she has a mind to depart with her children, let her have the half of his estate.

No. III.

79. If the husband will keep his goods he must keep his children.

80. If she have no issue, let her relations have the goods and the dowry.

81. If a man take a maid by force, let him pay fifty shillings to her first master, and afterwards redeem her, according to his pleasure.

82. If she be before betrothed to another, let him make a recompense of twenty shillings.

83. If she be with child, let him pay thirty-five shillings, and fifteen shillings to the king.

84. If a man lie with the wife of a servant, while her husband is alive, let him make a double recompence.

85. If a slave kill another slave, being innocent, let him compensate his death with all his substance.

86. If a servant's eye and foot be struck off, let it be compensated.

87. If a man bind another's servant, let him make a recompence of six shillings.

88. Let the robbing of a servant be compensated with three shillings.

89. If a servant steal any thing, let him restore the same double.

## NUMBER IV.

Catalogue, Latin and English, of the works of Venerable Bede, printed at Cologne, A. D. 1612, in eight volumes folio \*.

VOLUME FIRST contains,

No. IV.

1. CUNABULA grammaticæ artis, Donati.

*The rudiments of the grammatical art, according to Donatus.*

\* I have taken the catalogue of Bede's works from the Cologne edition of A. D. 1612, because it is the only complete one I have had an opportunity of consulting.



2. De octo partibus orationis, liber.  
*Of the eight parts of speech, one book.*
3. De arte metrica, liber.  
*Of the metrical art, one book.*
4. De scematibus scripturæ, liber.  
*Of the figures in scripture, one book.*
5. De tropis sacræ scripturæ, liber.  
*Of the trope in holy scripture, one book.*
6. De orthographia, liber.  
*Of orthography, one book.*
7. De arithmetiis numeris, liber.  
*Of arithmetical numbers, one book.*
8. De computo, dialogus.  
*Of computation, a dialogue.*
9. De deisionibus temporum, liber.  
*Of the division of time, one book.*
10. De arithmetiis propositionibus.  
*Of arithmetical propositions.*
11. De ratione calculi.  
*Of the ratio of calculation.*
12. De numerorum divisione.  
*Of the division of numbers.*
13. De loquela per gestum digitorum, libellus.  
*Of speaking by the motion of the fingers, a small book.*
14. De ratione unciarum, libellus.  
*Of the ratio of ounces, a small book.*
15. De argumentis lunæ.  
*An argument concerning the moon.*
16. Ephemeris, sive computus vulgaris.  
*The ephemeris, or vulgar computation.*
17. De embolismorum ratione computus.  
*The ratio of calculating intercalations.*
18. Decennovenaes circuli.  
*Of the cycle of nineteen years.*

- No. IV. 19. De cyclo paschali.  
*Of the paschal cycle.*
20. De mundi cœlestis terrestrisque constitutione, liber.  
*Of the constitution of the celestial and terrestrial world, one book.*
21. De musica theorica.  
*Of theoretical music.*
22. De musica quadrata, seu mensurata.  
*Of the quadrature, or mensuration of music.*
23. De circulis sphæræ et poli.  
*Of the circles of the sphere and pole.*
24. De planetarum et signorum cœlestium ratione.  
*Of the ratio of the planetary and celestial signs.*
25. De tonitruis, libellus.  
*Of thunder, a small book.*
26. Prognostica temporum.  
*Prognostics of the seasons.*
27. De mensura horologii, libellus.  
*Of the mensuration of a sun dial, a small book.*
28. De astrolabio, libellus.  
*Of the astrolabe, a small book.*
29. De nativitate infantium, libellus.  
*Of the nativity of infants, a small book.*
30. De minutione sanguinis, libellus.  
*Of blood letting, a small book.*
31. De septem mundi miraculis, libellus.  
*Of the seven wonders of the world.*
32. Hymni.  
*Hymns.*
33. De ratione computi, libellus.  
*Of the ratio of computation, a small book.*


VOLUME SECOND contains,

34. De natura rerum, liber.  
*Of the nature of things, one book.*

35. De temporum ratione, liber.  
*Of the ratio of times, one book.*
36. De sex ætatibus mundi, sive chronica, libellus.  
*Of the six ages of the world, a chronicle, a small book.*
37. De temporibus, liber  
*Of times, one book.*
38. Sententiæ ex Aristotele.  
*Sentences out of Aristotle.*
39. Sententiæ ex Cicerone, sive axiomata philosophica.  
*Sentences out of Cicero, or philosophical axioms.*
40. Proverbiorum, liber.  
*Of proverbs, one book.*
41. De substantiis.  
*Of substances.*
42. περὶ διδασκων, sive elementorum philosophiæ, libri quatuor.  
*Of doctrines, or the philosophy of elements, four books.*
43. De Paschæ celebratione, sive de æquinoctio vernali, liber.  
*Of the celebration of Easter, or of the vernal equinox, one book.*
44. De divinatione mortis et vitæ, epistola.  
*Of the foretelling of life and death, an epistle.*
45. De arca Noe.  
*Of Noah's ark.*
46. De linguis gentium.  
*Of the languages of nations.*
47. Sibyllina oracula.  
*Sybilline oracles.*

## VOLUME THIRD contains,

48. Gentis Anglorum ecclesiastica historia, libri quinque.  
*The ecclesiastical history of the English nation, five books.*

- No. IV. 49. Epitome ejusdem historiæ.  
 *Abridgment of the same history.*
50. Vita Cuthberti.  
*The life of St Cuthbert.*
51. Vita D. Felicis.  
*The life of St Felix.*
52. Vita D. Vedasti.  
*The life of St Vedast.*
53. Vita D. Columbani.  
*The life of St Columban.*
54. Vita D. Attalæ.  
*The life of St Attala.*
55. Vita D. Patricii, libri duo.  
*The life of St Patrick, two books.*
56. Vita D. Eustasii.  
*The life of St Eustatius.*
57. Vita D. Bertolfi.  
*The life of St Bertolf.*
58. Vita D. Arnolfi.  
*The life of St Arnolf.*
59. Vita D. Burgundoforæ.  
*The life of St Burgundofora.*
60. Justini martyrium, carmine.  
*The martyrdom of Justin, a poem.*
61. Martyrologium.  
*A martyrology.*
62. De situ urbis Hierusalem.  
*Of the situation of the city of Jerusalem.*
63. Interpretatio nominum Hebraicorum et Græcorum  
in Sacris Bibliis.  
*An interpretation of the Hebrew and Greek names  
in the Holy Bible.*
64. Excerptiones et collectanea quædam.  
*Certain excerpts and collections.*



## VOLUME FOURTH contains,

65. Hexameron.  
*On the six days creation.*
66. In Genesin expositio.  
*Explanation of Genesis.*
67. In Exodum explanatio.  
*Explanation of Exodus.*
68. In Leviticum explanatio.  
*Explanation of Leviticus.*
69. In librum Numeri explanatio.  
*Explanation of the book of Numbers.*
70. In Deuteronomium explanatio.  
*Explanation of Deuteronomy.*
71. In Samuelum prophetam allegorica expositio, libri quatuor.  
*An allegorical explanation of the prophet Samuel, four books.*
72. In libros Regum quæstiones.  
*Questions on the books of Kings.*
73. In Esdram et Neemiam prophetam, allegorica expositio, libri tres.  
*An allegorical explanation of the prophets Esdras and Nehemiah, three books.*
74. In librum Tobiae expositio allegorica.  
*An allegorical explanation of the book of Tobit.*
75. In Jobum expositio, libri tres.  
*Explanation of Job, three books.*
76. In Parabolas Salomonis expositio, libri tres.  
*Explanation of the Proverbs of Solomon, three books.*
77. In Cantica Canticorum expositio, libri septem.  
*Explanation of the Song of Songs, seven books.*
78. De tabernaculo et vasis ejus, ac vestibus sacerdotum, libri duo.  
*Of the tabernacle and its utensils, and of the vestments of the priests, two books.*

No. IV.

VOLUME FIFTH contains,

79. In Matthæum expositio, libri quatuor.  
*Exposition on St Matthew, four books.*
80. In Marcum expositio, libri quatuor.  
*Exposition on St Mark, four books.*
81. In Lucam expositio, libri sex.  
*Exposition on St Luke, six books.*
82. In Joannem expositio.  
*Exposition on St John.*
83. In Acta Apostolorum expositio.  
*Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles.*
84. De nominibus locorum vel civitatum, quæ in libro  
Actuum Apostolorum leguntur.  
*Of the names of places and cities mentioned in the  
Acts of the Apostles.*
85. In D. Jacobi epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St James.*
86. In primam D. Petri epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St Peter.*
87. In secundam ejusdem epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of the same.*
88. In primam B. Joannis epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St John.*
89. In secundam ejusdem epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of the same.*
90. In tertiam ejusdem epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the third epistle of the same.*
91. In epistolam Judæ Apostoli expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Jude.*
92. In Apocalypsim Joannis Apostoli explanatio.  
*Exposition on the Revelations of St John.*

## VOLUME SIXTH contains,



93. Retractationes in Actus Apostolorum.  
*Retractations on the Acts of the Apostles.*
94. Quæstiones in Acta Apostolorum, sex.  
*Six questions on the Acts of the Apostles.*
95. In epistolam Pauli ad Romanos, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to the Romans.*
96. In epistolam Paulipriorem ad Corinthios, expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians.*
97. In epistolam Pauli posteriorem ad Corinthios, expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians.*
98. In epistolam Pauli ad Galatas, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to the Galatians.*
99. In epistolam Pauli ad Ephesios, expositio.  
*Exposition of the epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians.*
100. In epistolam Pauli ad Philippenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to the Philippians.*
101. In epistolam Pauli ad Collossenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to the Colossians.*
102. In epistolam Pauli in priorem ad Thessalonicenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St Paul to the Thessalonians.*
103. In epistolam Pauli posteriorem ad Thessalonicenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of St Paul to the Thessalonians.*

- No. IV. 104. In epistolam Pauli primam ad Timotheum, expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St Paul to Timothy.*
105. In epistolam Pauli secundam ad Timotheum, expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of St Paul to Timothy.*
106. In epistolam Pauli ad Titum, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to Titus.*
107. In epistolam Pauli ad Philemonem, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to Philemon.*
108. In epistolam Pauli ad Hebræos, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St Paul to the Hebrews.*
109. Aniani epistola ad Evangelum, presbyterum.  
*Epistle of Anianus to Evangelus, a presbyter.*
110. Joannis Chrysostomi epistola de laudibus beati Pauli Apostoli.  
*Epistle of John Chrysostom, in praise of the blessed Apostle Paul.*

VOLUME SEVENTH contains,

111. Homiliæ æstivales de tempore, triginta tres.  
*Thirty-three summer-homilies for the seasons.*
112. Homiliæ æstivales de sanctis, triginta duæ.  
*Thirty-two summer-homilies on the saints.*
113. Homiliæ hyemales de tempore, quindecim.  
*Fifteen winter-homilies for the seasons.*
114. Homiliæ quadragesimales, viginti duæ.  
*Twenty homilies for Lent.*
115. Homiliæ hyemales de sanctis, sedecim.  
*Sixteen winter-homilies on the saints.*
116. Sermones ad populum varii.  
*Sundry sermons to the people.*
117. Scintillæ, sive loci communes.  
*Sparks, or common places.*

118. De muliere forti, libellus.  
*Of the strong woman, a small book.*
119. De officiis, libellus.  
*Of morals or duties, a small book.*
120. Fragmenta quædam in Libros Sapientales, et  
Psalteri versus aliquot.  
*Fragments on the Book of Wisdom, and some  
verses of the Psalms.*

## VOLUME EIGHTH contains,

121. De templo Salomonis, liber.  
*Of the temple of Solomon, one book.*
122. De sex dierum creatione, liber.  
*Of the six days creation, one book.*
123. Quæstiones super Genesim.  
*Questions on Genesis.*
124. Quæstiones super Exodum.  
*Questions on Exodus.*
125. Quæstiones super Leviticum.  
*Questions on Leviticus.*
126. Quæstiones super Numeri.  
*Questions on Numbers.*
127. Quæstiones super Deuteronomium.  
*Questions on Deuteronomy.*
128. Quæstiones super librum Jesu Nave.  
*Questions on Joshua.*
129. Quæstiones super librum Judicum.  
*Questions on Judges.*
130. Quæstiones super librum Ruth.  
*Questions on Ruth.*
131. Quæstiones super quatuor libros Regum.  
*Questions on the four books of Kings.*
132. Quæstionum variarum, liber.  
*Of various questions, one book.*

- No. IV. 133. In Psalmorum librum commentaria.  
*Commentaries on the book of Psalms.*
134. Vocabulorum Psalterii expositio.  
*Exposition on the words of the Psalms.*
135. Sermo de eo, quod in Psalmis legitur, " Dominus de cœlo prospexit," &c.  
*A sermon on this passage in the Psalms,—“ The Lord looked down from heaven.”*
136. In Boethii librum de Trinitate, commentarius.  
*Commentary on the book of Boethius on the Trinity.*
137. De septem verbis Christi, oratio.  
*An oration on the seven words of Christ.*
138. Meditationes passionis Christi per septem diei horas.  
*Meditations on Christ's passion, for seven hours of the day.*
139. De remediis peccatorum.  
*Of the remedies of sins.*

Beda, besides all the above works, was the author of several other tracts which have been published, and of some which are still in MS \*. This sufficiently proves, that, considering the times in which he flourished, and the manifold disadvantages under which he laboured, he was one of the most studious and ingenious men that this island ever produced.

\* See Biographia Britannica, t. 1. p. 651. 652.

## NUMBER V.

No. V.

The Lord's Prayer, in the Anglo-Saxon and other kindred languages, derived from the ancient Gothic or Teutonic.

## 1. ANGLO-SAXON.

U REN Fader thic arth in Heofnas. 1. Sie gehalgud thin Noma. 2. To cymeth then Ryc. 3. Sie thin Willa sue is in Heofnas, an in Eortho. 4. Uren Hlaf oferwistlic sel us to daeg. 6. And forgefe us Scylda urna, sue we forgefan Scyldgum urum. 6. And no inlead usig in Custnung. 7. Ah gefrig usich from Isle. Amen.

## 2. FRANCO-THEOTISC.

Fater unser thu thar bist in Himile. 1. Si geheila-got thin Namo. 2. Queme thin Rihhi. 3. Si thin Wil-lo, so her in Himile est o si her in Erdu. 4. Unsar Brot tagalihhaz gib uns huitu. 5. Inti furlaz uns nu-sara Sculdi so unir furlazames unsaron Sculdigon. 6. Inti ni gileitest unsih in Costunga. 7. Uzouh arlosi unsi fon Ubile. Amen.

## 3. CIMBRIC.

Fader uor som est i Himlum. 1. Halgad warde thitt Nama. 2. Tilkomme thitt Rikie. 3. Skie thin Vilie, so som i Hammalam, so oeh po Iordanné. 4. Wort dachlichha Brodh gif os i dagh. 5. Ogh forlat os uora Sculdar, so som ogh vi forlate them os Skildighe are. 6. Ogh inled os ikkie i Frestal fan. 7. Utan frels os ifra Ondo. Amen.



## 4. BELGIC.

Onse Vader die daer zijt in de Hemelen. 1. Uwen Naem worde gheheylight. 2. U Rijke kome. 3. Uwen Wille gheschiede op der Aerden, geljick in den Hemel. 4. Onse dagelijckt Broodt gheeft ons heden. 5. Ende vergheeft ons onse Schulden, ghelijck wyooch onse Schuldenaren vergeven. 6. Ende en leyt ons niet in Versocckinge. 7. Maer verlost ons vanden Boosen. Amen.

## 5. FRISIC.

Ws Haita duu derstu biste yne Hymil. 1. Dyn Name wird heiligt. 2. Dyn Rick tokomme. 3. Dyn Wille moet schoen, opt Yrtryek as yne Hymile. 4. Ws deilix Bræ jov ws jwed. 5. In verjou ws, ws Schylden, as wy vejac ws Schyldnirs. 6. In lied ws nact in Versieking. 7. Din fry us vin it Quæd. Amen.

## 6. HIGH-DUTCH.

Unser Vater in dem Himmel. 1. Dien Name werde geheiligt. 2. Dien Reich komme. 3. Dein Wille geschehe auf Erden, wie im Himmel. 4. Unser taeglich Brodt gib uns heute. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie wir unsern Schuldigern vergeben. 6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung. 7. Sondern erloese uns von dem Vbel. Amen.

## 7. SUEVIAN.

Fatter ausar dear du bischt em Hemmal. 1. Gehoyliget weard dain Nam. 2. Zuakomme dain Reych. 3. Dain Will gschea uff Earda as em Hemmal. 4. Ausar deglich Braud gib as huyt. 5. Und fergiab as ausre Schulda, wia wiar fergeaba ausarn Schuldigearn. 6. Und fuar as net ind Fersuaching. 7. Sondern erlais as fom Ibal. Amen.



## 8. SWISS.

Vatter unser, der du bist in Himlen. 1. Geheyligt wer dyn Nam. 2. Zukumm uns dijn Rijch. 3. Dyn Will geschahe, wie im Himmel, also auch uff Erden. 4. Gib uns hut unser taglich Brot. 5. Und vergib uns unfere Sculden, wie anch wir vergaben unsern Schuldneren. 6. Und fuhr uns nicht in Versuchnyss. 7. Sunder erlos uns von dem Bosen. Amen.

## 9. ICELANDIC.

Fader vor thu som ert a Himnum. 1. Helgest thitt Nafn. 2. Tilkome thitt Riike. 3. Vere thinn Vilie, so a Jordu, sem a Himne. 4. Gieff thu oss i dag vort daglegt Braud. 5. Og fiergieff oss vorar Skulder, so sem vier fierergiefum vorum Skuldinautum. 6. Og inleid oss ecke i Freistne. 7. Heldr frelsa thu oss fra Illu. Amen.

## 10. NORWEGIAN.

Wor Fader du som est y Himmelen. 1. Gehailiget worde dit Nafn. 2. Tilkomma os Riga dit. 3. Din Wilia geskia paa Iorden, som handt er udi Himmelen. 4. Giff os y Dag wort dagliga Brouta. 5. Och forlaet os wort Skioldt, som wy forlata wora Skioldon. 6. Och lad os icke homma voi Fristelse. 7. Man frals os fra Onet. Amen.

## 11. DANISH.

Vor Fader i Himmelen. 1. Helligt vorde dit Navn. 2. Tilkomme dit Rige. 3. Vorde din Villie, paa Iorden som i Hemmelen. 4. Giff oss i Dag vort daglige Bred. 4. Oc forlad oss vor Skyld, som wi forlade vore Skyldener. 6. Oc leede oss icke i Fristelse. 7. Men frels os fra Ont. Amen.

## 12. SWEDISH.

Fader war som ast i Himmelen. 1. Helgat warde titt Nampn. 2. Till komme titt Ricke. 3. Skei tin Wilie saa paa Iordenne, som i Hemmelen. 4. Wart dagliga Brod giff oss i Dagh. 5. Och forlat oss wara Skulder sa som ock wi forlaten them oss Skildege aro. 6. Och inleed oss icke i Frestelse. Ut an frals oss i fra Ondo. Amen.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.











D4  
32  
P. 100

THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Santa Barbara

STACK COLLECTION

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW.

30m-8. 65 (F6447s4) 9 to 2





AA

000 328 502

